

THE
ENGLISH
REVIEW

JANUARY 1910

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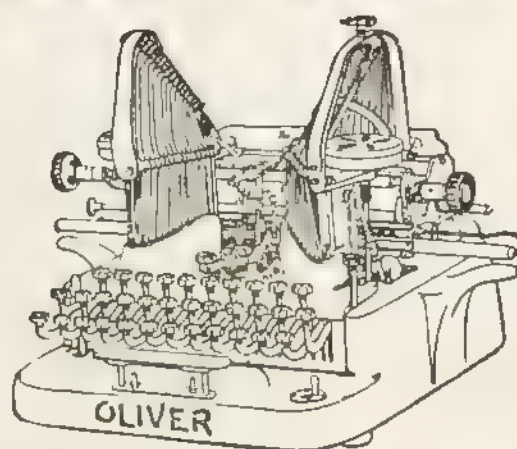
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Absence

By the late Francis Thompson

[The following poem, found among Francis Thompson's unrevised manuscripts, is here published by consent of his Literary Executor.]

WHEN music's fading's faded,
And the rose's death is dead,
And my heart is fain of tears, because
Mine eyes have none to shed ;
I said,
Whence shall faith be fed ?

Canst thou be what thou hast been?
No, no more what thou hast !
Lo, all last things that I have known,
And all that shall be last,
Went past
With the thing thou wast !

If the petal of this Spring be
As of the Spring that's flown,
If the thought that now is sweet is
As the sweet thought overblown ;
Alone
Canst thou be thy self gone.*

* Following four hypothetical lines : Only so canst thou be thy gone self.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

To yester-rose a richer
The rose-spray may bear
Thrice thousand fairer you may be,—
But tears for the fair
You were
When you first were fair !

Know you where they have laid her,
Maiden May that died ?
With the loves that lived not
Strowing her soft side ?
I cried,
Where Has-been may hide ?

To him that waiteth, all things !
Even death, if thou wait !
And they that part too early,
May meet again too late :—
Ah, fate,
If meeting be too late !

And when the year, new-launched,
Shall from its wake extend
The blossomy foam of Summer,
What shall I attend,
My friend !
Flower of thee, my friend ?

Sweet shall have its sorrow,
The rainbow its rain,
Loving have its leaving,
And bliss is of pain
So fain,
Ah, is she bliss or pain ?

MODERN POETRY

A Prayer

By T. Sturge Moore

HIDE me for ever, hide me now,
For all my will is frustrate. Take,
O take my thought, as thou
From Semele didst Bacchus take ;
But first, O flood me with thy might,
Let me consume in thy delight !

So may I die, yet dying know
Zeus was a partner to create
This beauty ripe in me. Ah, show
Mine eyes thy power, and elate
My throbbing heart with confidence,
Thou father of all joy intense !

Thou father of this intense pain,
Thou fill'dst me with this avid thought
That cannot breathe in me. How fain
Was I to live ! and long have sought—
My hopes by holiness forbidden—
To be from thy light safely hidden.

II

Ah, happy Semele ! she was
By satisfaction blinded :
Likewise in one bright sheet of awe,
Let me, let me, be winded :
Free me from all that is not thine,
All fault that only can be mine.
Though flesh dread love so male and mighty,
Whose single aim reproves all flighty
Impuissant sparkles of desire ;
As firefly by a forest fire
Lap thou my separate will to shine,
Be light and glory wholly thine.

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III

To Semele's bed by midnight came,
In the fair flower-months of her youth,
A love she could not see or name.
Thine ardent soul, which is but as it gives—
For bliss is all its function, name and truth—
Near her heart lived, near my thought lives.
Ah ! she grew pregnant with a son divine,
Whose life from hers absorbed the best, till she,
Exhausted from within, night-long did pine
For thee to take him from her and set free
That residue of weakness, all that seemed
Oppressive to the wealth with which she teemed:
So take my thought, so take my life from me !

MODERN POETRY

Four Poems

By Walter de la Mare

MISS LOO

WHEN thin-strown memory I look through,
I see most clearly poor Miss Loo,
Her tabby cat, her cage of birds,
Her nose, her hair—her muffled words,
And how she'd open her green eyes,
As if in some immense surprise,
Whenever as we sat at tea
She made some small remark to me.

It's always drowsy summer, when
From out the past she lives again ;
The westering sunshine in a pool
Floats in her parlour still and cool ;
While its lean wires the slim bird shakes,
As into piercing song it breaks ;
Till Peter's pale-green eyes ajar,
Dream, wake ; wake, dream, in one brief bar :
And I am sitting, dull and shy,
And she with gaze of vacancy,
Her large hands folded on the tray,
Musing the afternoon away :
Her satin bosom heaving slow
With sighs that softly ebb and flow,
And her plain face in such dismay,
It seems unkind to look her way :
Until all sudden back doth come
Her cheerful, gleaming spirit home ;
And one would think that poor Miss Loo
Asked nothing else, if she had you.

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THE WITCH

WEARY went the old witch,
Weary of her pack,
She sat her down by the churchyard wall,
And jerked it off her back.

The cord brake, yes, the cord brake,
Just where the dead did lie,
And charms and spells and sorceries
Spilled out beneath the sky.

Weary—weary was the Witch ;
She rested her old eyes
From the lantern-fruited yew-trees,
And the scarlet of the skies.

And out the dead came stumbling,
From every rift and crack,
Silent as moss, and plundered
The gaping pack.

They wish them three times over,
Away they skip full soon—
Bat and Mole and Leveret,
Under the rising moon ;

Owl and Newt and Nightjar—
They take their shapes, and creep,
Silent as churchyard lichen,
While she squats asleep.

All of these dead were stirring ;
Each unto each did call—
“ A Witch, a Witch is sleeping
Under the churchyard wall :

A Witch, a Witch is sleeping ”—
The shrillness ebbed away ;
And up, the wayworn moon clomb bright,
Hard on the track of day.

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She shone, high, wan and silvery ;
Day's colours paled and died ;
But save the mute and creeping worm,
Nought else was there beside.

Names may be writ ; and mounds rise,
Purporting, Here be bones ;
But empty is that churchyard
Of all save stones.

Owl and Newt and Nightjar,
Leveret, Bat and Mole
Haunt and call in the twilight,
Where she slept, poor soul.

THE BINDWEED

THE bindweed roots pierce down
Deeper than men do lie,
Laid in their dark-shut graves
Their slumbering kinsmen by.

Yet what frail thin-spun flowers
She casts into the air,
To breathe the sunshine, and
To leave her fragrance there.

But when the sweet moon comes,
Showering her silver down,
Half wreathèd in faint sleep,
They droop where they have blown:

And all the grass is set,
Beneath her trembling ray,
With buds that have been flowers,
Brimmed with reflected day.

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WHERE

WHERE is my love—
In silence and shadow she lies,
Under the April-grey, calm waste of the skies ;
And a bird above,
In the darkness tender and clear,
Keeps saying over and over, Love lies here !

Not that she's dead ;
Only her soul is flown
Out of its last pure earthly mansion ;
And cries instead
In the darkness tender and clear,
Like the voice of a bird in the leaves, Love—love lies here.

MODERN POETRY

Three Poems

By Ezra Pound

CANZON: THE YEARLY SLAIN

[WRITTEN IN REPLY TO MANNING'S "PERSEPHONE"]

[*"Et huiusmodi stantie usus est fere in omnibus cantionibus suis ARNALDUS DANIELIS, et nos eum secuti sumus"* (Dante, "*De Vulgari Eloquentia*," II. 10)]

I

Ah ! red-leaved time hath driven out the rose
And crimson dew is fallen on the leaf
Ere ever yet the cold white wheat be sown
That hideth all earth's green and sere and red ;
The Moon-flower's fallen and the branch is bare,
Holding no honey for the stary bees ;
The Maiden turns to her dark lord's demesne.

II

Fairer than Enna's field when Ceres sows
The stars of hyacinth and puts off grief,
Fairer than petals on May mornings blown
Through apple-orchards where the sun hath shed
His fleet-foot messengers to make them fair ;
Fairer than these the Poppy-crowned One flees.
And Joy goes weeping in her scarlet train.

III

The faint damp wind that, ere the even, blows
Piling the west with many a tawny sheaf,
Then when the last glad wavering hours are mown
Sigheth and dies because the day is sped ;
This wind is like her and the listless air
Wherewith she goeth by beneath the trees,
The trees that mock her with their scarlet stain.

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IV

Love that is born of Time and comes and goes !
Love that doth hold all noble hearts in fief !
As red leaves follow where the wind hath flown
So all men follow Love when Love is dead.
O Fate of Wind ! O Wind that can not spare,
But drivest out the Maid, and pourest lees
Of all thy crimson on the wold again,

V

Kore * my heart is, let it stand sans gloze !
Love's pain is long, and lo, love's joy is brief !
My heart erst alway sweet is bitter grown.
As crimson ruleth in the good green's stead
So grief hath taken all mine old joy's share
And driven forth my solace and mine ease
Where pleasure bows to all-usurping pain.

VI

Crimson the hearth where one last ember glows !
My heart's new winter hath no such relief,
Nor thought of Spring whose blossom he hath known
Hath turned him back where Spring is banishèd.
Barren the heart and dead the fires there,
Blow ! O ye ashes, where the winds shall please,
But cry, " Love also is the Yearly Slain."

VII

Be sped, my Canzon, through the bitter air !
To him who speaketh words as fair as these,
Say that I also know the " Yearly Slain."

* The name "Korè" or "the Maiden" is especially used of Persephone with regard to her being stolen by Lord of Dis and thereby causing the death of summer.

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CANZON: THE SPEAR

[This fashion of Stanza is used by Jaufre Rudel in the song, "D'un amor de lonh."
The measure is rather to be sung than spoken.]

I

THE clear far light of love I praise
That steadfast gloweth o'er deep waters,
A clarity that gleams always.
Though man's soul pass through troubled waters
Strange ways to him are openèd
To shore the beaten ship is sped
If only love of light give aid.

II

That fair far spear of light now lays
Its long gold shaft upon the waters.
Ah! might I pass upon its rays
To where it gleams beyond the waters,
Or might my troubled heart be fed
Upon the frail clear light there shed;
Then were my pain at last allay'd.

III

Although the clouded storm dismays
Many a heart upon these waters,
The thought of that far golden blaze
Giveth me heart upon the waters,
Thinking thereof my bark is led
To port wherein no storm I dread;
No tempest maketh me afraid.

IV

Yet when within my heart I gaze
Upon my fair beyond the waters
Meseems my soul within me prays
To pass straightway beyond the waters.
Though I be alway banishèd.
From ways and woods that she doth tread
One thing there is that doth not fade.

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V

Deep in my heart that spear-print stays,
That wound I got beyond the waters,
Deeper with passage of the days
That pass as swift and bitter waters,
While a dull fire within my head
Moveth itself if word be said
Which hath concern with that far maid

VI

That one who is lovelier than the sprays
Of eglantine above clear waters,
Or whitest lilies that upraise
Their heads in midst of moated waters
No poppy in the May-glad mead
Would match her quivering lips' red
If 'gainst her lips it should be laid.

VII

The light within her eyes which slays
Base thoughts and stilleth troubled waters
Is like the gold where sunlight plays
Upon the still o'er shadowed waters.
When anger is there minglèd
There comes a keener gleam instead
Like flame that burns behind thin jade.

VIII

Know by the words here minglèd
What love hath made my heart his stead,
Glowing like flame beneath thin jade.

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CANZON : TO BE SUNG BENEATH A WINDOW

[This manner of verse is used by Pierre Vidal in his song "Ab l'alén tir vas me l'aire." The measure fits song only and not speech.]

I

HEART mine, art mine whose embraces
Clasp but wind that past thee bloweth ?
E'en this air so subtly gloweth,
Guerdoned with thy sun-gold traces,
That my heart is half afraid
For the fragrance on him laid :
Even so love's might amazes.

II

Men's love follows many faces ;
My love only one face knoweth,
Toward thee only my love floweth
And outstrips the swift stream's paces.
Were this love well here display'd,
As flame flameth 'neath thin jade
Love should glow through these my phrases.

III

Though I've roamed through many places,
None there is that my heart troweth
Fair as that wherein fair groweth
One whose laud here interlaces
Tuneful words which I've assayed.
Let this tune be gently played
Which my voice herward upraises !

IV

If my song her grace effaces,
Then 'tis not my heart that showeth
But the skillless tongue that soweth
Words unworthy of her graces.
Tongue, that hath me so betrayed,
Were my heart but here displayed,
Then were sung her fitting praises !

Letters from America

By G. Lowes Dickinson

VIII.—THE RELIGION OF BUSINESS

IN the house in which I am staying hangs an old coloured print, representing two couples, one young and lusty, the other decrepit, the woman carrying an hour-glass, the man leaning on a stick ; and bearing the following inscription :

My father and mother that go so stuping to your grave,
Pray tell me what good I may in this world expect to have.

My son the good y^o can expect is all forlorn,
Men doe not gather grapes from of a thorn.

This dialogue, I sometimes think, symbolises the attitude of the new world to the old, and the old to the new. Not seldom I feel among Americans, as the Egyptian is said to have felt among the Greeks, that I am moving in a world of precocious and inexperienced children, bearing on my own shoulders the weight of the centuries. Yet it is not exactly that Americans strike one as young in spirit ; rather they strike one as undeveloped. It is as though they had never faced life and asked themselves what it is, as though they were so occupied in running that it has never occurred to them to inquire where they started and whither they are going. They seem to be always doing and never experiencing ; a dimension of life, one would say, is lacking, and they live on a plane instead of on a solid. That missing dimension I shall call religion. Not that Americans do not, for aught I know, “ believe ” as much as or more than Europeans ; but they appear neither to believe nor to disbelieve religiously. That, I admit, is true always and everywhere of the mass of people. But in Europe there has always been, and still is, a minority of spirits profound enough to open windows to the stars, and through these windows, in passing, the plain man sometimes looks. The impression America makes on me is that the windows are blocked up. It has become incredible that this continent was colonised by the Pilgrim Fathers. That intense, narrow, unlovely but

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genuine spiritual life has been transformed into industrial energy ; and this energy, in its new form, the churches, oddly enough, are endeavouring to recapture and apply to their machines. Religion is becoming a department of practical business. The churches, orthodox and unorthodox, old and new, Christian, Christian-scientific, theosophic, neo-thinking, vie with one another in advertising goods which are all material benefits. "Follow me, and you will get rich," "Follow me, and you will get well," "Follow me, and you will be cheerful, prosperous, successful." Religion in America is nothing if not practical. It does not concern itself with a life beyond, it gives you, here and now, what you want. "What *do* you want? Money? Come along! Success? This is the shop! Health? Here you are! Better than patent medicines!" The only part of the Gospels that seems to interest the modern American is the miracles, for the miracles really did *do* something. As for the Sermon on the Mount, well, that isn't business! Who ever got on by turning the other cheek?

This conversion of religion into business is interesting enough. But even more striking is what looks like a conversion of business into religion. Business is so serious that it sometimes assumes the shrill tone of a revivalist propaganda. There has recently been brought to my attention a circular addressed to the agents of an insurance society, urging them to rally round the firm, with a special effort, in what I can only call a "mission-month." I quote, with apologies to the unknown author, part of this production :

"THE CALL TO ACTION.

"How about these beautiful spring days for hustling? Everything is on the move. New life and force is apparent everywhere. The man who can stand still when all creation is on the move is literally and hopelessly a dead one.

"These are ideal days for the insurance field-man. Weather like this has a tremendously favourable effect on business. In the city and small town alike there is a genuine revival of business. The farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer, are beginning to work overtime. Spring is in the footstep of the ambitious man as well as in the onward march of nature. This is the day of growth, expansion, creation and re-creation.

"Consciously or unconsciously every one responds to the glad call to new life and vigor. Men who are cold and selfish, who are literally frozen up the winter through, yield to the warm, invigorating, energising touch of spring.

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“Gentlemen of the field force, now is the psychological moment to force your prospects to action as indicated by the dotted line. As in nature some plants and trees are harder to force than others, so in the nature of human prospects some are more difficult than others. Sunshine and rain will produce results in the field of nature. Patience and persistence will just as surely produce results in the field of life underwriting.

“NOTICE

“If you secure any business on Thursday or Friday, please wire number and amount of applications, so they may be recorded in the tribute volume. It is not necessary to have the examination if the application is dated April.

“Will it not be possible for you during these five remaining days not only to increase the production from regular sources, but to go out into the highways and hedges and compel others to sign their applications, if for only a small amount ?

“Everything is now in full swing and we are going to close up the M—— Month

IN A BLAZE OF GLORY.”

Might not this almost as well have been an address from the Head Quarters of the Salvation Army ? And is not the following exactly parallel to a denunciation from the mission-pulpit of the unprofitable servant ?

“A few days ago we heard of a general agent who has one of the largest and most prosperous territories in this country. He has been in the business for years, and yet that man, for some unknown reason, rather apologises for his vocation. He said he was a little ashamed of his calling. Such a condition is almost a crime, and I am sure that the men of the Eastern Department will say that man ought to get out of the business.

“Instead of being ashamed of his calling, he should be mortally ashamed of his not calling.

“Are you happy in your work ? If not, give it up and go into some business more to your liking.

WHY IS IT ?

“So many times the question is asked, ‘Why is it and how is it that Mr. So-and-So writes so much business ? There is not a week but he procures new applications.’ Gentlemen, there’s

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but one answer to this question. There is a great gulf between the man who is in earnest and works persistently every day and the man who seems to be in earnest and makes believe he is working persistently every day.

“ One of our most successful personal producers said to the writer the other day : ‘ No wonder certain agents do not write more business. I couldn’t accomplish very much either if I did not work longer hours than they do. Some insurance agents live like millionaires and keep bankers’ hours. You cannot expect much business from efforts like that.’ This man speaks from practical knowledge of the business. He has written

*\$147,500 in personal business in
the last six weeks.*

“ It does seem rather strange, sometimes, that half of the men in the Eastern Department should be writing twice as much business as the other half. They are representing the same company ; presenting the same propositions ; are supposed to be talking to practically the same number of men ; have the same rates, same guarantees, and the same twenty-four hours in each day, and yet are doing twice the business. In other words, making more money. What really makes this difference ? I will tell you. They put heart into their work. There is an enthusiasm and earnestness about them that carries conviction. They are business through and through, and everybody knows it.

“ Are you getting your share of applications ? If some other agent is up early, wide awake and alert, putting in from ten to fifteen hours per day, he is bound to do business, isn’t he ? This is a plain, everyday, horse-sense business fact. No one has a patent on time or the use of it. To work and to succeed is common property. It is your capital and the use of it will determine your worth.”

I think, really, this is one of the most remarkable documents that could be produced in evidence of the character of American “ civilisation.” There is all the push, initiative and enterprise on which they justly pride themselves, there is also the reduction of all values to terms of business, the concentration of what, at other times, have been moral and religious forces upon the one aim of material progress. In such an atmosphere it is easy to see how those who care for spiritual values are led to protest that these are really material ; to pack up their goods, so to speak, as if they were biscuits or pork, and palm them off in that guise on an unsuspecting public. In a world where every one

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is hustling, the churches feel they must hustle too ; when all the firms advertise, they must advertise too ; when only one thing is valued, wealth, they must pretend they can offer wealth ; they must go into business because business is going into religion !

It is a curious spectacle ! How long will it last ? How real is it, even now ? That withered couple, I half believe, hanging on the wall, descend at night and wander through the land, whispering to all the sleepers their disquieting warning ; and all day long there hovers at the back of the minds of these active men a sense of discomfort which, if it became articulate, might express itself in the ancient words :

My son, the good y^e can expect is all forlorn,
Men do not gather grapes from of a thorn.

IX.—ART

I saw, to-day, some really remarkable landscapes by an American artist. So, at least, they seem to me. They have at any rate a quality of imagination which one does not expect to find in this country. "One does not expect"—why not ? Why, in this respect, is America, as undoubtedly she is, so sterile ? Artists must be born here as much as elsewhere. American civilisation, it is true, repels men of reflexion and sensitiveness just as it attracts men of action ; so that, as far as immigration is concerned, there is probably a selection working against the artistic type. But, on the other hand, men of action often produce sons with a genius for the arts ; and it is to be supposed that they do so as much in America as elsewhere. It must be the environment that is unfavourable. Artists and poets belong to the genus I have named "Mollycoddle" ; and in America the Mollycoddle is hardly allowed to breathe. Nowhere on that continent, so far as I have been able to see, is there to be found a class or a clique of men respected by others and respecting themselves who also respect not merely art but the artistic calling. Broadly, business is the only respectable pursuit, including under business Politics and Law, which in this country are departments of business. Business holds the place in popular esteem that is held by arms in Germany, by letters in France, by Public Life in England. The man therefore whose bent is towards the arts meets no encouragement ; he meets everywhere the reverse. His father, his uncles, his brothers, his cousins, all are in business. Business is the only virile pursuit for people of education and means who cannot well become chauffeurs. There is no doubt, the professorial career ; but

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that, it is agreed, is adopted only by men of "no ambition." Americans believe in education, but they do not believe in educators. There is no money to be made in that profession; and the making of money is the test of character. The born poet or artist is thus handicapped to a point which may easily discourage him from running at all. At the best, he emigrates to Europe, and his achievement is credited to that continent. Or, remaining in America, he succumbs to the environment, puts aside his creative ambition, and enters business. It is not for nothing that Americans are the most active people in the world. They pay the penalty in an atrophy of the faculties of reflexion and representation.

Things are different in Europe, and even in England. There, not only are artists and men of letters honoured when they are successful—they are, of course, honoured at that stage in America—but the pursuit of literature and art is one which a young man need not feel it discreditable to adopt. The contemporaries of a brilliant youth at Oxford or at Cambridge do not secretly despise him if he declines to enter business. The first-class man does not normally aspire to start life as a drummer. Public Life and the Church offer honourable careers; and both of them have traditional affinities with literature. So has the Law, still in England a profession and not a trade. One may even be a don or a schoolmaster without serious discredit. Under these conditions a young man can escape from the stifling pressure of the business point of view. He can find societies like-minded with himself, equally indifferent to the ideal of success in business, equally inspired by intellectual or æsthetic ambitions. He can choose to be poor without feeling that he will, therefore, become despicable. The attitude of the business classes in England, no doubt, is much the same as that of the business classes here. But in England there are other classes and other traditions; havens of refuge from the prevalent commercialism. In America the trade-wind blows steady, level, universal over the length and breadth of the continent.

This, I believe, is one reason for the sterility of America in Art. But it is not the only one. Literature and Art in Europe rest on a long tradition which has not only produced books and pictures, but has left its mark on the language, the manners, the ideas, the architecture, the physical features of the country. The books and the pictures can be transplanted; but the rest cannot. Thus, even though in every art the technical tradition has been interrupted, there remains in Europe what I will call the tradition of feeling; and it is this that is absent in America.

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Art in Europe is rooted ; and there still persists into the present something of the spirit which fostered it in the past. Not only is Nature beautiful, she is humanised by the works of Man. Politics are mellowed by history, business tempered by culture. Classes are more segregated, types more distinct, ideals and aims more varied. The ghost of a spiritual life still hovers over the natural, shadowing it with the beat of solemn winds. There are finer over-tones for a sensitive ear to catch ; rainbow hues where the spray of life goes up. All this, it is true, is disappearing in Europe ; but in America it has never existed. A sensitive European, travelling there, feels at once starved and flayed. Nothing nourishes and everything hurts. There is natural beauty, but it has not been crowned and perfected by the hand of man. Whatever he has touched he has touched only to defile. There is one pursuit, commerce ; one type, the business man ; one ideal, that of increasing wealth. Monotony of talk, monotony of ideas, monotony of aim, monotony of outlook on the world. America is industrialism pure and simple ; Europe is industrialism super-imposed on feudalism ; and, for the arts, the difference is vital.

But the difference is disappearing. Not that America is becoming like Europe, but Europe is becoming like America. This is not a case of the imitation that is a form of flattery ; it is a case of similar causes producing similar results. The disease, or shall we say, to use a neutral term, the diathesis of commercialism found in America an open field and swept through it like a fire. In Europe, its course was hampered by the structures of an earlier civilisation. But it is spreading none the less surely. And the question arises : In the future, when the European environment is as unfavourable to Art as the American, will there be, in the West, any Art at all ? I do not know ; no one knows ; but there is this to remark. What I am calling commercialism is the infancy, not the maturity of a civilisation. The revolution in morals, in manners and in political and social institutions which must accompany the revolution in industry, has hardly yet begun its course. It has gone further in Europe than in America ; so that, oddly enough, Europe is at once behind and in front of this continent, overlaps it, so to speak, at both ends. But it has not gone very far even in Europe ; and for generations, I conceive, political and social issues will draw away much of the creative talent that might have been available for Art. In the end, one may suppose, something like a stable order will arise ; an order, that is, in which people will feel that their institutions correspond sufficiently with their inner life, and will be able to

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devote themselves with a free mind to reflecting their civilisation in Art.

But will their civilisation be of a kind to invite such reflexion ? It will be, if the present movement is not altogether abortive, a civilisation of security, equity, and peace ; where there is no indigence, and comparatively little disease ; where war is confined to the frontiers of civilisation ; where the economic struggle, if not suppressed is limited in intensity and scope. Such a society, certainly, will not offer a field for much of the kind of Art that has been or is now being produced. The primitive folk-song, the epic of war, the novel or play inspired by social strife will have passed irrecoverably away. And more than that, it is sometimes urged, there will be such a dearth of those tense moments which alone engender the artistic mood, that Art of any kind will have become impossible. If that were true, it would not, in my opinion, condemn the society. Art is important, but there are things more important ; and among those things are justice and peace. I do not, however, accept the view that a peaceable and just society will necessarily also be one that is uninspired. That view seems to me to proceed from our incurable materialism. We think there is no conflict except with arms ; no rivalry except for bread ; no aspiration except for money and rank. It is my own belief that the removal of the causes of the material strife in which most men are now plunged would liberate the energies for spiritual conflict ; that the passion to know, the passion to feel, the passion to love, would begin at last to take their proper place in human life, and would engender the forms of Art appropriate to their expression. When I say, "It is my belief," I speak like a fool. I mean, it is my will that so it shall be "There shall be Art compatible with Justice and with Peace" ; that is what every artist ought to say ; not, as too many of them say now "Since Justice and Peace are incompatible with Art, I am for iniquity and war."

To return to America, what I am driving at is this. America may have an Art, and a great Art ; but it will be after she has accomplished a social transformation. Her Art has first to touch ground ; and before it can do that, the ground must be fit for it to touch. It was not till the tenth century that the seed of Mediæval Art could be sown ; it was not till the thirteenth that the flower blossomed. So now, our civilisation is not ripe for its own Art. What America imports from Europe is useless to her. It is torn from its roots ; and it is idle to replant it ; it will not grow. There must be a native growth, not so much of America, as of the modern era. That growth America, like Europe, must

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will. She has her prophet of it, Walt Whitman. In the coming centuries it is her work to make his vision real. *

EPILOGUE

It is my last night in New York; and reflecting on the impressions I have communicated to you in my previous letters I am conscious of a kind of remorse.

I have given my impressions truly; but they have always been critical or hostile. This, it is true, will not hurt America; but somehow it hurts me. The truth is that all the things I dislike in modern civilisation are peculiarly prominent in this country; and I have been more interested in civilisation than in America. But to-night there crowd into my mind feelings and reminiscences of a different kind. I realise that I am parting from some dear friends, and from many charming acquaintances; and that the civilisation I have criticised is supported by and supports the simplest, kindest, and most hospitable people in the world. That, perhaps, after all, is the thing that matters most; the thing that makes everything else, in the way of good, possible. And that I have simply taken for granted, and passed on to the other side. How would it be, I wonder, if I could visit England as a stranger? If I saw her only from the outside? Got my impressions from travel, from the press and magazines, from casual conversation? Came only rarely and by accident into contact with the set of people who, for me, stand for England? Saw the chaotic imperfection of the present moment in her history, and had but a dim appreciation of the processes that led up to it and are leading away from it? Certainly, I think, in that case, my vision of England would not be more flattering than my vision of America. And I should have, I fear, to recognise that we English, while we exemplify in our civilisation many of the evils I deplore in America, have perhaps less candour to recognise them, and less energy to deal with them.

In any case, the emphasis I have laid on what I think are the defects of America does not spring from hostility. It springs rather from an intense anxiety. Democracy, I feel, is the chief hope of civilisation; and also it is its chief menace. It is its hope because it is inspired by the ideals of justice and humanity; it is its menace because it is indifferent or even hostile to the ideals of personal greatness and distinction. A Democracy that shows itself ugly, ignoble, gross, materialistic, is betraying the cause of Democracy. A Democracy that worships wealth and power, and nothing else, is a plutocracy in disguise. Demo-

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cracy ought to hate itself in its present form, just as I hate it. America ought to hate itself, and yet to believe in itself ; and hate itself because it believes in itself. For what it believes in, or ought to believe in, is its courage, its intelligence, its faith ; and these qualities will need to destroy their own present manifestation. I think if I did not somehow love America I could not so much hate her civilisation. I have recalled my fears, my anxieties, my hostilities and my disgust ; but I feel to-night that underlying them all is a faith and a love which is deeper than they ; a faith and a love in and for not America only, nor England, but civilisation and mankind.

When I wrote these lines I meant to conclude ; and I stepped out upon the terrace that looks across the East River to New York. The spectacle enthralled me ; nothing more extraordinary is presented in the modern world. Across the gulf before me, went shooting forward and back interminable rows of fiery shuttles ; and on its surface seemed to float blazing basilicas. Beyond, rose into the darkness a dazzling tower of light, dusking and shimmering, primrose and green, up to a diadem of gold. About it hung galaxies and constellations, outshining the firmament of stars. And all the air was full of strange voices, more than human, ingeminating Babylonian oracles out of the bosom of night. This is New York. This it is that the average man has done, he knows not why ; this is the symbol of his work, so much more than himself, so much more than what seems to be itself in the common light of day. America does not know what she is doing, neither do I know, nor any man. But the impulse that drives her, so mean and poor to the critic's eye, has perhaps more significance in the eye of God ; and the optimism of this continent, so seeming-frivolous, is justified, may be, by reasons lying beyond its ken. Let my little voice be drowned for you by the voices that fill the air. All that I have said is true, to the best of my perceptions. But it is not the Truth ; and America, like Europe, like Asia, like life, waits for the truth to judge.

The Puntilla

By Austin Harrison

To all Seville, Ylitza was "the virgin."

In the whole of Andalusia no eye of woman glowed so lustrous and superbly beautiful. Pañuelo, the painter, would talk for hours about the beauty of the girl's limbs and carriage and the poise of her gipsy head. Even José, the giant picador, whose word on woman was prophetic, pronounced her form "divine." As for Pablo, the one-eyed guitarist, who had played to all the dancers in Seville for the last sixty years, he would close his remaining eye when questioned on the subject, and repeat pontifically: "I tell you, the child has the devil's joy in her body."

And Seville tacitly agreed. There was also this mystery about her. Ylitza was a gipsy, come no one knew whence, proud and scorner of men: who lived in a comfortable apartment—not in the poor *barrio* across the river—with a wrinkled, withered woman whom rumour designated as her mother. *Carajo!* But no man knew. Nor had any man had list or favour of her.

Then there were other disturbing features. Not only was she never seen at the races, at cock-fights, but she never went to the "Bulls." Men could stomach her pride, her gipsy scorn, her defiant muliebrity, but this of the Bulls was too much. It was hard enough upon them already to have to bear with this girl without a *novio*, a lover; but a girl of such divinity who had no man or love and would not go to the Bulls—*Santa Virgén!* the bloods of Seville had a galling time of it.

Yet no love stirred her breast. Not that she was "anti-pathetic." *Hombre!* Ylitza was the very calendar of youth and gaiety. All the girls who danced with her at the Novedades adored the warm brown skin and freshness of her. The children—strings of babbling, swarthy mites—ran by her as she walked. The very Holy Church, grown sceptical, too, in these days of necessitous sainthood, kept bountiful and wary watch.

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"*Tiene la Santa Gracia*," it was said ; and so Pepita, the alcahueta, admitted.

But that morning Seville was in commotion. The *cafés* hummed. Men stood in groups, chatting with excited mien and gesticulation. First the *aficionados*—the people "in the know," that is, about bulls and bull-fighters—had had it ; then the waiters had learnt it, then the clubs, the hawkers, vendors, flower-sellers, boot-blacks, the idle and the mendicant fraternity, and at midday all the town rang with the news, every tongue and eye distraught.

Part of the excitement was natural enough. It was a holiday, the September festival of the "Utrera" ; and there was to be a bull-fight at four in the afternoon, and not only were all the bulls from the great stock or *ganaderia* of the Count of Veragua and adjudged "good" by the learned, but Torres, the greatest espada of his time, the darling of Spain and the best-looking valiant in the ring was to fight ; and, well, the rest concerns Ylitza.

He had arrived early from Madrid that morning, gone out at about eleven to the *café* de las Delicias, and there, as he was about to sit down before a glass of manzanilla wine, Ylitza, followed by her children, came upon him.

Torres was the only bull-fighter Ylitza had ever been known to speak to ; he was also the only man she had ever been heard to speak about. As for Torres, his passion was public enough ! Every woman in Spain knew Torres loved but this strange, proud gipsy girl and she, in her heart, loved him for it. Now, on that morning, Seville knew that Torres had sworn to win her.

As she neared his table, Torres, sombrero in hand, sprang to his feet. He stood a full head above her ; his tight-fitting bull-fighter's trousers and short Majo jacket outlining the sinewy, plastic frame. His white teeth gleamed the joy within him.

"Señorita, your servant," he said. "Are you coming to-day ?"

Ylitza tendered him her hand.

"I hate your 'Bulls,' you know, Torres," she replied, flashing her magnificent eyes into his. "Why do you ask me ?"

"Because, lovely child of my soul, I love you. I want you to come to-day, because I feel that you might love me if you saw me with the bulls—as other women do," he added significantly.

Ylitza withdrew her hand.

"Other women !" she laughed. "*Madre mia*, do you think I'm jealous ? I won't see you and your mangled horses,

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"I tell you." She stamped her foot. "What is there more to say?"

The man paled visibly under the dark bronzed skin; so a Roman centurion might have looked at one of Hannibal's black Africans.

People were listening, crowding about them. "Ylitza," the man breathed into her face, "may I come and see you afterwards?"

Ylitza's red lips curled.

"Ylitza," he whispered, "I've got the soul of God within me to-day. By all the Saints of Spain, I must speak with you. After to-day—if I live," he threw in, rapidly crossing himself—"I'll do whatever you wish if I may only have you for my own, in my arms for ever. Do you hear, Ylitza, for ever! I swear it. See!"

He whipped out a small dagger from a sleeve pocket, pricked a finger with its point, dipped his right forefinger in the drops of blood and made the sign of the Cross.

"I swear it with my blood," he said.

The girl watched him thoughtfully.

"*Bueno*," she said suddenly. "You may come."

She gave him a rippling smile and sped away.

In the arena Torres was phenomenal. Half a dozen times together he stood alone in the great circus and received the bulls' onslaught; now on bended knee—forward, backward without flinching an inch; now standing up with his back to the savage beast, only diverting the animal's horns at the last second by a sudden cast of his red capa; now vaulting with a pole over the bull's back, now calmly stroking its nose. Ovation after ovation greeted him. The man's bravery seemed inhuman.

The last bull was the finest and fiercest of the six. In five minutes it had killed eleven horses, not gored but slain outright with ferocious stabs in the chest. First one, a second, a third, then a fourth horse came down, man and rider crashed to earth in furious, mad encounter. Four times the bull leapt the barrier. Fresh horses entered the ring, and were as quickly destroyed. One of the picadors was carried out insensible. "Horses! Horses!" roared the crowd. Four more were brought in. Two of them stood together, the two picadores, who rode them, pointing their long lances. The bull paused, savagely snorting and pawing the earth.

"*Olé! Viva el toro!*"—the pandemonium was terrific. The bull charged blindly, madly. Swerving at the last minute,

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its horns caught one horse at the flank, lifted it right off its feet, dashed it against the other, and the bull, the two horses and their riders came headlong to the ground.

Yet another horse was killed, then the blare of trumpets heralded the death.

Torres stood in the ring alone with the "muleta" or small red cloth folded across his short sword. In his address to the President before advancing to the fight, he dedicated the bull to the "blood of woman." He would have no help. All his men were ordered out of the ring. He stood there motionless, superb, alone.

Twenty times the bull rushed at him, sweeping under the man's uplifted arm. Front and back, the horns swerved under the playing sword, almost grazing the man's silken breeches. He played with it on bended knee. Twice when the bull, grown wary and sullen, stopped dead in the middle of a "red" rush, and the huge circling horns, crimson with blood, gleamed a few inches from the man's face and all thought the end had come, the kneeling figure, beautiful in its graceful line, held firm, smiling, unflinching. Once the bull, stopped in its fierce career, put its nose right up to his face, as if suspicious of such mortal valiancy. Torres bent forward, almost touching its bleeding nostrils with his lips. From fourteen thousand throats the mob shouted their acclaim.

The man's gone mad, men said—but women thought he was a god. Suddenly Torres stood erect, the bright steel glinting in his hand. It was the end. A sigh, like the moan of wind, swept across the multitude. The bull, some twenty paces off the man, stood glaring, snorting, restless, defiant. A hush, as of death, fell upon the arena. Men held their breaths; women forgot even their fans. In the tremulous, ardent air the sun blazed down its glory.

Now Torres "had the eye" of the bull. Higher, higher—instinctively, following the line of the extended sword, the magnificent animal raised its head. Enough! The sword gleamed white and rigid. Man and beast fronted one another for the supreme trial, the man immobile as a statue.

"Ha! Ha!" he "challenged" it after the manner of bull-fighters.

The bull "reacted." With a savage low, the creature dashed upon the steel. Neither sword nor man budged. Just as the horns seemed penetrating his flesh a huge shout burst from the people. Blood for blood. Men could stand the tension no more.

The sword ran right in up to the hilt. Without moving

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his feet, the sinuous body of the man swerved backwards like a bended bow. On came the horns, Torres yielding before them. "He is caught," men shouted; but, suddenly the bull stopped, swerved, dropped on its knees. Its bleeding nozzle fell upon the man's foot. Automatically the thin body of the man shot back to its rigid, upright attitude. He gazed calmly at the bull, with folded arms, a smile of splendid triumph upon his face. He had accomplished the *recibiendo*, the most dangerous stroke in the craft. One last spasmodic effort, and again the bull raised its noble head. Its nozzle pointed, quivering, up into the man's face. Its cruel eyes cast their last, defiant message. A great flow of blood streamed from its mouth. It gazed proud, dying, magnificent, at the tall form smiling, motionless, down upon its agony. Not a man in all those thousands spoke. Slowly the beast's nozzle sank until it rested again upon the man's foot. A convulsive tremor passed along its body. It tried to rise, the nostrils dilated, then with a great calm and dignity the animal laid out its head—moved it slightly, as if to find a more comfortable spot—quivered—it was over, and there stood Torres with his right foot upon the dead head, smiling, beautiful and triumphant.

"My boy," old Cartijo, the retired bull-fighter and the most famous of this century, remarked to him afterwards in the dressing-room, "you fought as one possessed." And Torres answered, "I believe I am possessed."

He drove back to the hotel, like a conqueror returning from the wars. Vainly he sought Ylitza among the acclaiming mob. The thought of her absent, no doubt quietly singing to herself in her home, while all Seville applauded, goaded him like a lash. There were women there, hundreds of them, young, ardent, beautiful, waving to him from the balconies; who would have given their souls for his kisses. He spat fiercely into the road.

It was about nine o'clock before he had dined and shaken off his friends and admirers. Then he swung out into the blue night.

He was going to stab home to-night, *puo lo bueno*. The Arab-Spanish blood leapt in his veins. As he had faced that bull, so he would face Ylitza.

It was a starlit, creamy night, soft as velvet, still with the opalescent shimmer of Andalusian summer. For a few moments he stood outside the house inhabited by Ylitza, gazing at the illimitable arc above streaming with its myriad silver points in the perfume of the orange grove beside him, while the dull moan of city hubbub rose up to him from where the sky glowed

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red ; then at the little fretted gate, through which, in the dim light, Ylitza's court, gay with tiles and fountain and oranges and myrtles, shone cool and green and fragrant, he paused.

Throwing back his head, he whistled a bar of a well-known Malagueña.

Almost immediately a shutter half-opened, and a girl's voice cried shrilly :

“ Who's there ? ”

“ Is the Señorita Ylitza at home ? ” Torres sang out. “ It is Torres. May I come in ? ”

The shutter snapped suddenly to. There was a pause.

A pretty girl with a long shawl thrown over her shoulders unbolted the gate ; Torres passed through.

“ Welcome to a brave man,” she said.

“ May the Blessed Virgin protect you,” he replied.

He strode into the room with the sublime swagger of his kind.

“ *Buenas Noches, Señorita.*” He paused half-way towards her, erect, defiant. “ May I have your hand ? ”

She was standing, leaning against the open window at the other end of the room. Swathed tightly in a black and yellow Manila shawl, she was superbly young and desirable. Her arms and throat were bare. There were no rings on her exquisite fingers, no bands on her arms, but long, gipsy earrings hung from the pink ears and in the blue-black, luscious hair, combed in the flamenco Andalusian style, some roses nodded red.

The gipsy face, warm like red wine flushing under the skin, lit up in smile.

“ Why not, Torres ? So you have come ! ” she smiled, giving him her hand.

The man touched it with his lips. “ I suppose you've heard ? ”

“ Heard ? No. Heard what ? ” the girl sang back to him, tossing her gipsy head.

She returned to her position leaning against the wall, casting out curiously into the night.

Torres watched her sullenly. The graceful line and contour of her back sent a warm light into his eyes. He put his hat down on the table slowly.

“ Ylitza,” he said softly.

The girl never moved.

“ Ylitza,” the voice rose hot and imperious. “ Ylitza, listen. Before I entered the ring to-day I vowed my soul to the Virgin Mary, there in our little chapel. Do you understand ? ”

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I said to the Virgin on my knees : ‘ Holy Mother, to-day I fight for the love and blood of a woman.’ And I said to the Virgin : ‘ If it is wrong so, let me die then in the ring ; but if it is well, let my night be crowned with love.’ I risked all. I sought death like a caress. And see, Ylitza, I am alive. The Virgin has sent me to you.”

The girl turned round and watched him. One hand lay on her hip. Her head was flung back. The eyes were superb.

“ Torres, you speak well. No, I haven’t even seen an evening paper.” She threw up her hand with dainty disdain. “ So you see how little bull-fighting concerns me.”

Very slowly the black gipsy eyes swept across the man’s countenance. For a second the two lights burned into each other, then the girl’s sought space.

“ You might care to see what happened—up there,” he swaggered, after a pause. He pulled out a newspaper from his pocket, unfolded it and placed it carefully on the table.

“ As you please,” Ylitza laughed. “ Men are vain as animals. Having killed the bulls yourself, you want to see how others thought you killed them.”

“ That’s it, Ylitza. I want you to read what they say about me.”

The girl sat on the sill of the window, playful, watchful as a kitten. The man sprawled his length voluptuously on the sofa.

“ Well,” he exclaimed. “ Won’t you even read about me ? ”

Ylitza stared out through the window and sang.

Torres rose, tossed her the paper, returned to the sofa and blew thick rings.

“ Must I ? ” the girl laughed, half-mocking, half-entreating.

“ Yes. At any rate you will see I’ve spoken truthfully.”

When she looked up again an unwonted tenderness beamed in her radiant eyes.

“ I suppose you think I ought to love you,” she half sang to him in that musical way which women have in Southern Spain, “ because, well, because you are a magnificent slayer of bulls and a supremely brave man.”

“ Don’t you like brave men, Ylitza ? ”

“ I would never look at any man who wasn’t.” She lifted her head, frowned, pouted, smiled, swaying, with a rocking motion of the hip, to and fro, like a dancer.

Torres leapt to his feet.

“ Ha ! Ha ! You admit that, do you ? I’m young and rich enough, aren’t I ?—thanks to my heart and sword. Women

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don't think me ugly, either." He spoke proudly, with his eyes on fire.

"Yes. You're all that, Torres. You're the only man I've ever spoken to, thought about or looked at. You know that."

Her voice was soft and gentle with music. She punctuated the words with coquettish movements of the head.

"I would never have asked you here, did I not care?"

A cruel, triumphant smile passed over the man's face.

"Go on," he threw back at her.

She returned his triumphant stare with eyes too beautiful to harbour fear.

"Go on," she exclaimed passionately. "Haven't I a soul too? Am I not young? Is my body not good? Do men not covet me? Every day I see the lust burning in their eyes. *Vaya*, Torres, am I to give myself because a bull-fighter calls?"

She folded her arms across her bosom. In her half-closed eyes a light of mockery burnt warningly.

Torres stepped enraptured towards her.

"Puñeta!" he said. "By the virgin of Pilar, you are divine. It's because you flash your gipsy eyes at me that I long to crush my blood's fire into your soul. I need you, Ylitzá, for my life. For three years now, I've pleaded, like a sainted choir-boy on bended knee, before you. I—I—I've even prayed."

He paused. His eyes rolled, fiery, burning into hers. His massive throat swelled. He clutched the table with both hands. "And I've had enough. Do you hear? I, Torres, the bull-fighter, have had enough. Do you know what that means? Listen and I'll tell you. It means that all the laws, all the world and all the people in the world are nothing to him. It means, it means——"

"Well, I'm listening." The words came to him like a perfume.

"Hear then," he went on, dwelling on each word with the staccato emphasis of Spain, "it means that Torres has come for you—to ask you to be his. It means that he has come, the whole man of him, to ask for your love; to throw his life at your feet, and that there is no turning now, no going back, no end—but you or——" he stopped, threw up his arms—"or life—up there, with the angels."

He drew himself up to his full height, crossed his arms upon his breast, gloating, magnificent.

"Do you remember the first time I saw you? You were dancing, and I sat just beneath you, and at the end I rose and before the whole public threw you my hat, and you—*Sangre*

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de Dios! you looked at it, looked at the people, looked at me and cried out, 'Shall I pick it up?' and no one dared to speak because it was I, Torres, who had thrown it you. And I said 'Blessed be the mother who bore you!' and all the people shouted, and you placed my hat upon your head and danced again such a Tango that all the blood in me ran cold, and as you left the stage, you looked at me with those great eyes of fire you have and said: 'Is it Torres?' and every voice yelled back my name, and you said again, '*Ole! Guapecito!* here's a kiss for you?' Have you forgotten, Ylitzá? Mother of God! Ever since that day I've loved you, needed you, your blood, your beauty, and your soul."

He struck his chest fiercely.

"Here, I, Torres, await you."

The passion of him quivered with a splendid virility. The girl looked at him for a moment helplessly, then the gipsy blood in her flared up, all the contradictory fire and savagery of her race.

She broke out in rippling peals of laughter; plucked a rose from her hair and threw it at him.

"A tribute, Torres," she laughed. Her eyes gleamed with a malicious joy. She was radiant, magnetically beautiful.

"Then you really love me, Torres?"

"As I believe in Paradise," the bull-fighter rejoined.

Ylitzá eyed him thoughtfully, chewing the stem of a red rose. A melting softness stole into her eyes.

The man saw the weakening, and again the cruel smile flashed across the Moorish face. She stood, glorious and defiant, all the Saracenic blood of her flushing her face with red, a creature of fierce joy and ecstasy.

"Try me, Ylitzá," the man said.

With a movement quick as a snake, the girl was beside him. Her eyes were almost closed, her head and shoulders swung superbly backwards. She folded her arms about his neck.

"You swore this morning on your life's blood to do anything I might ask of you. Torres, swear to me to give up bull-fighting, and I will be yours for ever—now—to-night—as you please. If you really love me, cut off your *coleta!*" *

She put her head up caressingly against his chest. But Torres did not see the corners of her little mouth bubbling wantonly behind the red rose.

"Cut off my *coleta!*" he repeated, slowly, mechanically.

* The *coleta* is the small pigtail worn by bull-fighters. It is only cut off when they retire from the Ring, and besides being the badge of their profession, is the dearest possession they have.

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"As I say, Torres."

All the fire in the man seemed to go out. He put her from him, staggered back, staring vacantly, dismayed.

"Cut off my *coleta*!" he repeated incoherently, then he burst out in wild, uncontrollable laughter.

Ylitza never moved.

"Well," she spoke presently, "it makes you laugh, doesn't it?"

The man looked at her. There was no weakness about the girl now; he felt that instinctively.

He stared at her stupidly, thinking, turning it all over.

"Are you in earnest, Ylitza?"

"Absolutely."

"And you ask me—Torres—in the height of my career, deliberately to cut off my *coleta*, to retire from the ring—for the sake of, of——"

"Of a girl. Yes, Torres, I do."

He tried to smile, to look at her, but he could not endure her pleading, mocking eyes.

"You ask me to be the laughing-stock of all Spain," he stammered. "You ask me to court the sneers of every boy in the streets, to be the jibe of every old woman in the country. Ylitza, you are not serious. You do not know what you ask. You cannot mean it. Ylitza, darling child of my dreams, don't say you mean this! Ylitza, Ylitza!" The voice was full of tender, aching pathos.

"Yes, Torres, I do. I mean this. If you love me, if you want me to be yours, then do what I ask of you. You say 'Try me.' Good. I will. By my mother's love, I swear it."

"I would rather you asked me to cut off my right arm," the man answered.

For some minutes they measured one another, silent as the still night.

As he looked, something about the girl's face made him think and examine her closely. She was in earnest, he saw. Her eyes had a strange tenderness he had never noticed there before. Slowly it dawned upon him, Ylitza loved, she really loved him.

He came down with his fist heavily on the table, and again hard with the other. His face craned over to her, cruel, flushed and passionate.

"Come, child, enough of this nonsense. We'll be serious now."

He held out his arms, moving smilingly towards her.

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"Stop, Torres," she cried to him. "You say it's enough. Good! It is. I've nothing more to say. You may bid me good-night."

But Torres was not to be stayed now. He came close up to her, placed both hands on the girl's shoulders and sought the soul of her in her eyes.

"You bid me go," he said hoarsely.

"It is getting late. There is no use in staying here," she sang to him, pouting and provocative.

"And if I refuse?"

The girl broke from him.

"You break promises, I know," she retorted. "But you do not break your honour."

"Honour!" The blood surged into the man's face at the word. Not even his own mother would jibe him thus. He was trembling with passion now. He seized her delicate, thin wrists and held them as sometimes he grasped the horns of bulls in the arena. But she never winced. A beautiful smile played upon her lips. Her whole soul flowed lovingly towards him.

And so they stood, reading one another's love. Gradually his hands relaxed their hold, the man's eyes softened, streaming into hers. Suddenly his arms were about her, crushing her face to his breast. He kissed her passionately on the hair. Then with one hand he threw back her head. She was still smiling, her lips all dimpling kisses, tender and appealing. He drank in slowly the warm soft beauty of her gipsy face. He kissed her eyes, her lips, her throat madly. Then without a word he put her from him.

"Ylitza, I will do it," he gasped. "I cannot live without you. I shall go mad without you."

He went to the table, sat down, took up a pen and wrote:

"I, Torres, announce that this day I have cut off my *coleta* and do therewith retire from the ring. There will be no other announcement.

"Signed: TORRES."

"SEVILLE. Sept. 8, 1894."

"It's the puntilla,"* he said solemnly.

Then he arose, opened the door and shouted to Lola, the maid.

"Lola," he said to the girl when she came in, "take this

* The puntilla is the little iron weapon used by the grooms of the Ring to kill the injured horses, and the bulls if necessary; it is driven into the brain just behind the ear, and, if rightly aimed, causes instantaneous death.

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to the *Seville Gazette*. Don't say where it came from. Say Torres, the espada, gave it you. Quick!"

He pushed a hundred peseta note into the astonished girl's hand, pushed her out of the room, and shut the door.

Ylitza, leaning against the open window, followed him with a gaze half-terrified, half fiercely triumphant. She made no attempt to speak. One hand was pressed against her heart, in her lips the red rose trembled fitfully.

Torres stood still in thought; suddenly his hand went up to the back of his head.

"Ha! the *coleta*!" He pulled out a stiletto from his sleeve.

"I think this is true enough," he muttered to himself, passing his finger along the edge.

He stood so for a few seconds fingering the blade, then quickly bending his head down and holding the small pigtail in his left hand close to the roots, he drew the knife sharply across it.

When the little emblem of his profession lay severed in his hand, he held it up dangling to his eyes.

"You grew well, little hairs," he apostrophised. "Now I shall need you no more. Farewell—*coleta*! We part—the man I was. Farewell!"

He pressed the black hairs to his lips and kissed them fervently.

Then he saw her.

She was crouching with the stealth of a panther, savage, alluring, inarticulate. Only the rose in her mouth moved. Only the sough of the orange-trees came up to him. Tears welled into his eyes.

"My God, I hardly feel a man," he sobbed.

He pressed both hands to his forehead. His broad chest heaved. He tried to speak, gasped, stuttered, broke down and sobbed convulsively.

She let him weep, she felt it was no use seeking to control him. She just placed her little head against his breast and held him with a great tenderness in her arms.

And so they stood by the open window in the scent of verbena and orange-tree, all the love of the woman going out to the bull-fighter weeping like a child before her in the stillness of the deep ardent night. . . .

When Torres awoke the gold of early morning danced through the open window. He heard the cry of the watchman calling out the hour. It was four in the morning. He turned round and looked at her.

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She was asleep, lying with her hand under her head, her lips budding, like an infant's, just apart; the long lashes curled upward. Some of her black hair lay entwined about his arm.

Then he remembered. He put his hand to the back of his head—it was gone. He was a bull-fighter no longer. He lay still with clenched fists and thought.

For a girl's whim, he had unmanned himself. For a night of wild lust, he had severed himself from fame, from his career, from all that he prized and lived for. Beads of perspiration dotted his brow. All Spain would mock. His old father, there in Marchena, would curse him. His mother, poor aged dame, she would say nothing—she might understand her boy, but there would be tears in her eyes when she met him—the first he had ever caused her. The sun looked in and played in motes of golden, dancing joy upon the lovers' forms. Already there was movement in the streets. From afar, the great bell on the Giralda Tower intoned its melancholy chant, summoning to early Mass. From the river a ship's siren shrieked. The Puntilla!

No, he would not die. He was too young and ardent for death. Ylitza was his, and he loved her with all his Spanish soul. Let the people laugh! Let the women mock—had he not a woman more beautiful, more ravishing than all of them? He would explain things to his mother. His colleagues—they would understand. The mob—Bah! He would put his knife into the bowels of any man who scoffed. Body of Christ! He would live. *Carajo!* By all the Saints!

His warm kisses awoke her.

For a while she lay silently, almost dreamily, in his arms while he kissed her gipsy liquid eyes.

"Torres, Torres," she spoke at length, freeing herself from his embrace.

"Well, little soul of mine, what is it?"

The girl seemed to struggle for air. She gazed at him longingly, a haunting anguish flowing from her eyes, a look of fear and torment furrowed upon her face.

Torres lay back on the pillow smiling, expectant. Ylitza's eyes wandered rapidly, appealingly towards the window.

"Kiss me, Torres," she said, nestling suddenly against him.

"Torres, I want to tell you. I have something to say to you."

"Bueno! Is it so very difficult?"

Slowly, with ineffable tenderness, she bent over and kissed him.

"Difficult!" Her voice had a hollow, rasping ring. She

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placed her two arms upon his chest and lay, looking down upon him, with her face resting in her hands.

"Torres, I—I was there."

"There! Where?"

"At the bull-fight. I went secretly. I saw you kill that bull."

"You saw me kill that bull!"

"Yes, Torres."

She put her hands through his hair and kissed the staring face wildly in despair.

"And I loved you madly from that moment."

"You saw me! You loved me! Ylitza, I don't understand. What do you mean?"

A poignant note of horror grated in the man's voice. He pushed her roughly from him.

"Ylitza, Ylitza. Speak. What is this madness?"

He sat up in bed, staring, inarticulate, his face grown livid with emotion.

"Torres, dear Torres, it is true. I loved you. I saw it all and loved you with all my soul and body."

"True. You saw me. You loved me," he repeated.

His body rocked listlessly to and fro, his clenched fists beat despairingly against his brow.

Suddenly he turned round. He seized her in his arms and held her out at arm's length from him.

"True!" he repeated mechanically; "True!" searching as if into her soul. His gaze was met, unflinchingly, truthfully.

Very deliberately, carefully, he put her down upon the bed.

"True! True!" the man muttered.

He got out of bed, walked deliberately, steadily to the table, took up the long dagger and returned, slowly, to the bedside.

"Torres, Torres, I love you," moaned the girl.

"See, Torres, you may kill me. I am not afraid," Ylitza cried to him, arching her young bosom towards the dagger pointing and trembling from his hand.

"I love you, Torres, I was mad. I went to see you in the ring, and I came back with your love eating my heart. I wanted that, because I loved you, because I am a woman, a gipsy, and I wanted all, all that you have. Torres, my darling, have I not lain all night in your arms? Torres, it is not too late——"

"Too late!" The man spoke as if in dream.

"Torres, you can go back, can't you? You can say it was only a joke, can't you? You can go back to your bulls, Torres?"

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"A joke! Go back!"

He glared at her, terrible in his speechless rage.

Suddenly words came to him.

"Curse you for your devil's beauty! Curse your fiendish gipsy kisses! Curse the mother who bore you! Curse——!"

"Stop, Torres," shrieked the girl, suddenly grown white and savage as the man before her.

"You shall not curse my mother. I loved you because I thought you were a man—now I know you are only a coward."

Torres drew back, choking, staggering to the end of the bed. The fierce beauty and defiance of the girl reeled into his brain. He saw red, as a bull. A hot stream of blood blinded him. Blindly he struck her down.

"Torres! Torres!"

Five, six times he plunged the long knife into the warm flesh.

When sense returned to him, the blood of her lay crimson all across the bed. He listened. Seville was still asleep. He placed his hand upon her lacerated heart—it was still. He glanced furtively at the door, at the window, and again at the white body lying mangled in blood.

Suddenly his eyes suffused with tears.

"Ylitza! Mother of God!" he cried in anguish.

Then with the dagger, red and reeking with her blood, he sought her in the love which is eternal.

Colour Meanings of Some British Birds and Quadrupeds

By Philip Oyler

THOUGH it is conceivable that the colour of certain animals is fortuitous, it is nevertheless improbable, and it is generally agreed that colouration serves the purpose of :

- (i) Concealing an animal for offence :
- (ii) Concealing an animal for defence :
- (iii) Appealing to the æsthetic taste of an animal's mate.
- (iv) Affecting the temperature of an animal.

Of these four, the first and second are undoubtedly the most important, because the existence of life depends upon them : the third of secondary importance, because mating is secondary to the existence of life : in the fourth, it is still little known to what extent heat and cold depend upon colour, but it is to be assumed that it has only slight significance here.

Scientists have been accustomed to classify the various forms of animal colouration under such heads as "protective colouration," "warning colours," "mimetic resemblance," and so on—leading one to suppose that an animal is coloured for some one particular purpose and for that purpose only. Now, colouration may serve but one purpose at a time, but the same animal may be coloured both for offence and defence (as we shall show later) and for other purposes too perhaps, and we maintain that it is not only dangerous but false to assume, for example, that the brown head-dress, worn by the so-called black-headed gulls in the nesting season, is only useful in satisfying the birds' æsthetic tastes, or to assume that the stoat's white winter coat is only for protective purposes. It is not surprising that scientists should have found the subject a difficult one, because it is really within the province of the artist-naturalist, dealing, as it does, with the question of how things look and not what they are—a question in which imagination is more valuable than analysis, and a knowledge of animals in their natural surroundings more

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valuable than a knowledge of their actual structure. Nor, then, is it surprising that the conclusions of scientists should have been upset by the discoveries of an American artist, Mr. Abbot Thayer. He has conclusively proved that brilliantly coloured birds, hitherto assumed to be conspicuous, are really well concealed, and he has explained the principles upon which colouration depends.

It is those principles, together with certain discoveries of our own, that we propose to explain by examples from familiar British animals; but it must not be thought that the conclusions are based only upon observation of British animals. That would be too small a class of itself for anything to be deduced.

It would seem that, if an animal wishes to be concealed, it must wear the same colours as its surroundings; and that, if it does so, it is necessarily concealed. This, however, is not at all correct, for concealment does not depend primarily upon colour resemblance: it depends mainly upon the counter-balancing of light and shade, no matter what colours are used. Suppose we take a brown oval (I suggest an oval, because it represents roughly the shape of, say, a bird's body) and place it upon a piece of brown cloth of exactly the same shade. We shall see that it is distinctly visible a long way off. If concealment depended only upon colour resemblance, the oval would be invisible. But it is not so, because there is a dark shadow formed on its underside, and this shadow makes the oval's outline clearly perceptible. It makes, moreover, the oval appear to consist of two colours, light and dark brown—which also causes it to be conspicuous against the evenly coloured background. But if we paint the underside, where the shadow is formed, with any light colour, exercising care to cover the right amount of surface—which must be found by actual experiment—and to make the colour tone off on the sides of the oval, it will then become invisible at a comparatively short range. That is because the light colour has reduced the shadow so that the shadow is unnoticed; and in consequence of the lack of it the oval's outline is not discernible. As a matter of fact, it is by the shadows and high lights that we are able to judge the form of any object, and when these are counter-balanced, the object becomes a toneless nothing, as it were. When, therefore, the oval's outline is lost by the counter-balancing of light and shade, its actual colour merges into that of the background, and there is nothing to betray the presence of a solid body. Colour, then, is of secondary importance, and enables an animal, whose colours do harmonise with its surroundings, to escape notice at shorter range than would other-

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wise be possible. And if we take any other colour, the same experiment can be made and proved true. More than that—if we take a striped or spotted oval and place it upon a background of exactly the same colour with exactly the same markings upon it, that too will be visible at once, because of the shadow formed upon the underside; and that too will become invisible if we reduce the shadow by an application of light colour. It is obvious then that neither similar colours nor similar markings would be efficient of themselves for concealment, though each of them aids in making concealment more perfect.

Now, this principle of counteracting light and shade is that upon which all animals are clothed, and any animal's capacity for concealing itself depends primarily upon it. The actual colours which it wears and the scheme of them are only of secondary importance. And this principle holds good whether we apply it to the fallow-deer or the harvest-mouse, to the peregrine-falcon or the golden-crested wren and, for that matter, to other forms of animal life, provided that they do not live in greater depth of water than light penetrates. As it has been found necessary because an animal's body breaks the light-rays and casts a shadow, it obviously cannot apply to life that needs little or no light for existence; and as it is for the purpose of concealment, it is obvious too, that it would serve no use to animals that rely upon sight or smell or hearing or speed or something other than concealment for the purpose of offence or defence.

Birds like the robin or linnet or chaffinch or thrush or sparrow, that perch as a rule upon small branches, have no need of great contrasting colours, because contact with a small branch does not create a large shadow, and consequently does not make a light underside so necessary. But animals that live in the open and spend much time on the ground have, for the most part, very light undersides. Consider the rabbit, hare, stoat, green plover, lark, oyster-catcher—just to mention a few of the many—and then think of the uniform colour of the mole that seldom comes above ground and so has no need for counter-balancing colour, or of the swift that never rests while it is light and has, moreover, speed sufficient for escape from any enemy—or of the rook that needs no concealing colour because it neither hunts any active victim nor is itself hunted.

For concealment, then, this principle of counteracted light and shade is of primary importance for two reasons. Firstly, concealment is not possible without it. Secondly, it applies to the actual body of the animal, that is, to the larger part of it.

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We do not find, however, any animal following this principle only. Each one, however simple its colouration appears to be, has in reality several principles working together. Even a hare or green plover, two of the apparently most simply dressed animals, have more than one principle of colouration, as we shall show. Other principles are necessary because the head and neck and tail of a bird, for example, obviously do not lend themselves to the same treatment, and even the actual body has other devices as well. Such principles are colour arrangements, like those on a badger's head or a woodcock's flanks; appendages, like the pheasant's long tail or the heron's plumes or the owl's "ears": vivid splashes of colour, like the black heads of terns or the black tail-tip of the stoat or the white on a waterhen's tail-coverts or the white on a wheatear's rump. We shall have to explain the value of these colour-schemes and how they accomplish their purpose, remembering always that the aim in each case is to deceive the eye or attract its attention, so that the animal's outline is not noticed. When that aim is accomplished, no matter how, the solidity of the animal is not apparent. And when we consider any animal in detail, we must bear in mind whether it is coloured for offence or for defence or for both, whether it wishes to be invisible by day or by night, in motion or at rest.

Let us take a bird of striking contrast—the common green plover or peewit, with its almost pure white underneath, dark green to black iridescent back and head, dark crest, and splashes of white each side of the head and neck just above and below the eye and where the tail joins the body. It does not matter whether the bird is sitting or standing on a meadow, a ploughed field or the sea-shore, it is exceedingly difficult to see from any distance. It is practically impossible to detect it on recently turned soil of rather dark colour with the white flints showing. Whether sitting or standing the plover shows some white in front, which is easily mistaken for a flint. It is curious that it should be so well concealed on artificially prepared ground, but many people have noticed the fact, having experienced the surprise of entering an apparently bare arable field and putting up some hundreds of plover. This is a tribute to the bird's adaptability and a very strong proof that invisibility is not merely a matter of colour, that colour is not an essential in fact, for there is really not a tone in common on the plover's feathers and on the arable. But though there is not a tone in common, there are suggested shadows and high lights on the bird's feathers that are like the shadows and lights found in such places as it frequents.

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It is most necessary to realise this point—that it is not so important to imitate the actual colour as the general light and shade. We must explain this further. Suppose we look at a patch of shingle some yards ahead, we notice that there are light places where the sun catches the tops of pebbles, dark places where shadows are formed under them, and if we look at the plumage of the dotterel that lives on the pebbles, we shall see at once that the plumage is an imitation not only of the colours of the pebbles but also of the high lights and of the shadows. Now consider the plover placed upon arable with its patches of light and dark. Its body becomes a toneless nothing as it were, because the shadow is counteracted: the patches of white under the eye, the white of the breast, which is continued farther up the breast than is necessary for the mere counteracting of the shadow, break up the mass of dark, while the white visible on the part of the tail next the body divides the tail from the rest of the body, and all this white represents high lights or non-solidity, while the dark places—the dark of the head and body and folded wing and tail stand for the shadows. It seems that the dark places would appear much larger than the natural shadows on the ground, and so they would perhaps but for the fact that the dark feathers are iridescent, and so from any given point of view the light, falling upon them, does not show an unbroken mass of dark, but, rather, segments of dark interspersed with colour, that colour being for the most part green, and so helping to protect the bird in grassy places where the ground has less of shadows and high lights. Apart from the fact that the white places on the bird look like objects catching the light, they serve the purpose of attracting the eye and so preventing it from noticing the outline. White, in fact, always makes for the appearance of non-solidity. We can prove this by taking a stuffed specimen of the bird, putting it upon the grass, and darkening the white places—when the bird at once becomes obvious. There is one more thing to consider in the case of this bird, and that is the tuft on its head, from which the Highlanders have so appropriately called it “The little horn of the rushes,” loving as the bird does, the fields where rushes grow. This tuft also serves to break the outline, for the eye, tracing the bird’s head, would follow the feathers of the tuft, and so be left in space at the end of them, where they taper off to a point. This is probably what actually happens if the eye glances over the bird and takes in part of the outline. The eye must of course trace each edge of the object, before it can know what that object is, but its workings are so quick as to be practically simultaneous. It is interesting to note that

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the tuft is considerably longer in the nesting season, and occurring as it does in both sexes, it is obviously not a question of attractive mating dress. Here again we can experiment with a stuffed specimen and see the enormous aid in concealment when the tuft is on, and how much more obvious the bird becomes when it is removed.

We took the plover as an example because it is familiar to every one and because it showed very clearly most of the principles employed—the counterbalancing of light and dark, the breaking up of an even surface (in this case the dark being broken up by means of iridescence and by splashes of white) into varying tones, the addition of an appendage to break the outline, and the stimulating of the eye by patches of light on a dark surface for the same purpose. And we took it because it had all these principles very clearly defined and, though all do not occur in each animal, the first and second are always indispensable to concealment. There must be the counterbalancing of light and dark, and there must not be an unbroken surface of colour. The necessity of the first condition has already been shown, and we must now explain the other. And though we try to take the cases separately for the purpose of explanation, it must be remembered that they really merge into one another.

We never find in nature any large mass of unbroken colour. Everything is split up into segments of the same or various colours, or passes from tone to tone by insensible gradations. A field of hay may appear from a distance to be of an even shade of green, but upon close inspection it is found to contain the red of sorrel, the white of daisies, the yellow of dandelions, the brown of grass seeds, and innumerable shades of green, both in the whole and in each particular plant. In the same way the sand of the sea shore is a quantity of many coloured small stones, and even snow is a collection of six-starred crystals and really contains all the colours commingled. From a distance the grass, or the sand or the snow appear to be of one single tone, but apart from actual colour, the fact of there being a number of particles causes minute shadows and makes each object appear to contain a number of tones. There are always varying colours everywhere, due either to colouring pigment or structure, and as the beasts and birds must have these broken up colours for their backgrounds, so it is necessary for them if they wish to be invisible, that their colours too should be broken up, that they should as it were put on clothes that really represent something of the surroundings in which they live—details and impressionist pictures of the woods or the shore or the sky, with backgrounds to match. And that

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is what they actually do. The skin of a hare, for example, is not of an even colour all over. It varies from light underneath through shades of grey and brown, light and dark, nor is each hair the same colour at the roots as in the middle or at the tips, because the surroundings in which it lives are not of an even colour. The hare that lives in close contact with the pasture has a pelage that really represents, in the mass, a patch of brown grass *with the spaces in between*; the dark hairs showing through the outer covering, just as the dark of the earth shows through the grasses and just as dark shadows are formed beneath the blades that catch the light; and, in addition, the skin changes its tone with the seasons and with its surroundings, and roughly speaking, the hairs represent the grass blades with their varying tones and the interstices and the dark beneath them. To complete the delusion, the dark tips of the hare's ears are laid over on the animal's back, whilst it is sitting in its form, and these dark tips represent earth showing through the grasses, as well as helping to break the more or less even surface.

And just as the hare matches a part of the field, so the woodcock that lives in the heart of the woods and other birds that do the same, wear a dress of dead leaves, light and dark brown, with black shadows, of distant forest vistas, commingled because the birds are not entirely seen against the leaves or the shadows of the distant aisles, but are distributed as it were among them. And their dress is subdued in colour because not much light penetrates, and where there is not much light there is not as a rule much colour. Think of the woodcock prodding among the dead oak-leaves and disclosing the black earth beneath them. There are dead leaves and black earth clearly marked on its feathers because they are close to it, and there are distant boles and shadows and high lights too as a background, suggesting the distant trees and intervening spaces. (It needs, like the hare, to be protected at close range, but it needs that protection for opposite reasons—the woodcock because it cannot see enemies coming from a distance in such thickets as it inhabits, the hare, because it lives in such exposed places that it would be detected from a great distance, if it did not match its surroundings very well.) Think of a night-jar sitting lengthwise in a lichen-covered branch. It has grey lichen and dark oak bark and dark knots painted on its body with signs of stripes going lengthwise, because that is how it sits on a branch. And it perhaps is even more like its surroundings because, as it hunts by night, it has to rest by day, and needs to be so protected that it does not have to worry about being on the watch. Now consider the jay and its gaudy colours,

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—the barred blue on its wings, the suggestion of blue in its eye, the white and black on tail and wings and under the eye for true artistic balance, and its general chocolate coloured body. Why is it so gaily dressed compared with the night-jar and the woodcock that inhabit the same woods? It is because their habits are such that the earth or leaves or boles are their background, while the jay haunts the sunny glades and the tops of trees where the light penetrates. And its blue feathers represent, roughly, the blue sky seen through the branches, the white feathers the white clouds, the black feathers the dark shadows under the trees, the chocolate feathers the general brown that is always in the woods at any time of year. And all the colours are mixed in the proportion in which they are needed. Only a little sky shows through the branches, only suggestions of clouds and dark shadows, and that is why the jay has only a little blue and a little white and a little black: while its general body colour is brown, because it spends all the year in the woods, and brown is the prevailing colour of our woods. This is a most important point to realise, namely, that the animal's colours are used in the proportion in which they are needed, and we must bear this in mind when we consider the scheme of colouration on any animal. Every one will admit how difficult it is to detect a jay on the higher branches of a tree, where the sky shows through in patches. It does not matter whether it is an oak tree or a larch or a Scotch fir, it does not matter what season of the year it is, the jay is always exceedingly difficult to detect while at rest in any of those cases. Now let us consider quite a different case, that of the green woodpecker. For all its name it really spends very little time in the heart of the wood—which we might guess from the fact that there is no brown, the distinctive wood colour, upon its feathers. It lives essentially in the trees on the edge of the wood and in the fields adjoining it, and its shades of green are very conspicuous against the grass. It may seem curious that this should be so, but it is true, and the woodpecker is perfectly aware of the fact, and never attempts to hide itself on meadow land. It always flies to a tree for cover. It prefers an oak tree, and for choice a dead upright branch at the top of it. It will cling to that, tail partly supporting its weight, head pointed straight up and pressed flat against the stem. In that attitude all its colours are lost against the light and it represents a knot or bulge in a branch, in spite of the fact that none of its colours are of the same tone as the branch on which it is sitting, and there is no bird that can conceal itself better. It will sound its queer laugh-like call, while one is immediately below it, yet

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it does not frame itself as a bird to the eye, even when one has watched it settle on a stem. It is a perfect example of counter-balanced colour, for if we examine a woodpecker we shall find bright yellow and bright green on its back as well as the vivid crimson on its head, and there is no trace of any such colours at all on a dead oak stem. No doubt the fact that it imitates the shape of the knot or bulge in the branch, helps the delusion, but the bird would be obvious enough for all that, were it not for the counterbalancing of colour. As red is the complement of green, the red head harmonises with the body colour.

Now consider the hoopoe, unfortunately becoming rare in our woods. There again is the general brown of the woods with splashes of white and black distributed mostly on the wings and crest; the brown for the background colour of the bole, the black for the shadows thrown by the rough bark of the tree-boles it frequents, the white for the fungus that grows on the boles. As it nests in hollow stems, and hollow stems mean decay, there is invariably fungus on those stems. And how wonderfully the hoopoe's white copies them, and how wonderfully the black represents the shadows—and there again, as with the green plover, is a crest to help break the outline. On the spotted woodpeckers we find the white and black splashes again (no brown on them because these birds frequent the silver birch boles of the open), but all black and white, not only because of fungus but also to represent the white bark and the dark scar marks on the boles.

The robin, become now almost a domestic pet, was originally a haunter of the beech woods, where its so-called red breast is a perfect imitation of the red-brown beech leaves that remain on the ground all the year round and retain their colour. One has only to see a robin among such leaves to realise the protection they afford, whether the bird is at rest or in motion, for when in motion it simply appears to be a leaf flirled an inch or two at a time by the wind. The squirrel's red-brown coat may be the colour of leaves, but is also that of the bole of Scots firs, its favourite tree, and when it wishes to be concealed, a squirrel sits in the angle of a branch and the bole, curls its tail over its back and head, and ruffles it. It is then that its colour is lost against the bole, and the outline broken by the bushy tail, that looks like a whorl of pine needles, whether seen in the light or against the dense green above. (Of course the principal service of its tail is for balance.)

Before we leave the animals of the woods, we must mention generally the warblers, with their subdued green tones and suggestions only of brown. Though they too live much in the

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woods as well as hedgerows, they are with us only for the summer, when there is much more green than brown ; moreover they live at the ends of branches amongst the dense leaves, because the insects they feed on live there : so the brown of the ground and of dead leaves is seldom their background, and for that reason they do not need much brown in their composition.

Every one must be familiar with the curious dark and light stripes on a badger's face. These are simply for offence, and are not continued down the body for reasons about to be shown. The prey hunted by the badger is small, so we must consider the badger's face from the point of view of a mouse, so to speak. All that a mouse could see of an approaching badger would be the face (the body would just be a dark shadow), and to the mouse the white stripes would be lost against the sky, because the face would appear on the sky line to the mouse and the dark stripes would look like grass or bushes. The white would appear in fact like inlets of sky between trees or grasses. The white is not continued down the body, because the body is not visible to those that the badger preys upon, and because it would then be very conspicuous itself. It is interesting to note that the eye, which needs to be protected in animals of prey, is well hidden in a dark stripe, because the eye itself is dark.

Now this front of light and dark is common to many animals of prey. Consider the fox, the pine-marten, the stoat, the otter, the weasel, the polecat, all these show a front of more or less white to the hunted, and there can be no doubt of its efficacy. In the case of the otter there is only a little light suggested round the muzzle, but in all the others it is conspicuous on throat or face or ears, the eye is always hidden in the colour that it matches, and the white is never continued down the back because it would make the animal itself conspicuous to its own enemies. On a somewhat similar principle many birds have chosen to wear black heads, not only to conceal their eyes, but to attract the eye of enemies, so that the rest of their body is unnoticed. The most striking instances of this are the various terns with their pure white undersides and underwings and black caps. To the fish, their prey, all that would be seen would be the little black head, because their white would be lost against the sky. No matter whether the sky is overcast or a cloudless blue, white is always more difficult to see against it than any colour. Any one can test this by flying a number of kites of different colours, when it will be found that the white one is lost sooner than any others—and this, of course, is natural when we take into account the constituency of white, and the constituency

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of the clouds or the sky. And as a patch of dark in a general light surface attracts the eye, so does a patch of light in a dark surface ; and that is the service of the white on a coot's head, or the white of a waterhen's tail. Each of these birds wears a general dark slate and green plumage—the slate colour that stagnant water appears when seen from a little distance, the green of grasses and rushes reflected at the water's edge : these colours, the slate and green, are duly proportioned, more slate showing than green, because the green is only at the water's edge. Now, if these birds had no white upon them, they would be clearly seen, but the white attracts the eye and prevents it seeing the bird's outline : the waterhen's white is on the under tail feathers, so the bird has to jerk its tail up continually to make the white show. We can prove the value of these white patches by experiment. Take a piece of slate coloured cloth to represent the water and pin an oval of greenish or any dark-coloured cloth upon it to represent a bird. The oval will be clearly seen. Now pin a piece of white paper on the oval, and its outline will at once be lost, because the white stimulates the retina of the eye and holds it fixed on the white. Similarly a dark patch on light has the same effect, and that accounts for the black tip on a stoat's tail, for the black ear tips of the mountain hare and the black mark round the eye and on the tail of a ptarmigan, when these animals have on their winter dress of white : while the white on a house-martin's or wheatear's or storm-petrel's or bullfinch's rump is an example of the reverse effect, but for the same purpose in each case—defence.

We have now enumerated all the principles involved in colouration, but it is impossible to separate them in their application. This has only been necessary to some extent for the sake of explanation, and the only generalisations that can be made are

(1) Animals that frequent the heart of the woods are mostly sombre in colour.

(2) Animals that frequent wide treeless spaces are also mostly sombre in colour.

(3) Animals that frequent the borderland of woods and hedgerows are mostly brightly coloured, because their surroundings are full of coloured flowers and light points on the facets of scintillating leaves.

(4) Animals that frequent the sea tend to be light in colour, if they live over it ; dark, if they live on it.

(5) Animals that frequent inland waters tend to be dark.

(6) Brilliantly coloured birds are among the most difficult to see : consider the jay, woodpeckers, hoopoe (already explained)

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and the kingfisher, whose iridescent blue-green back is just like the facets of wavelets lit by the sun.

(7) Birds that have no need of concealing colour tend to become black : raven, crow, rook, daw, starling, chough are examples. It is possible that daws and starlings, that doubtless gained immunity from attack through accompanying rooks, have become dark through sympathy as it were, but that is only a suggestion.

(8) White on an animal represents space, that is, non-solidity.

(9) Colour is used in the proportion in which it is needed.

(10) All appendages have a value in helping to conceal, whatever other duty they may perform.

“Mamka”

By J. Saturin

It was one of those rare, mild days which occur in the middle of the long, grey Russian winter. The sun had suddenly cast a genial melting glow over the snow-covered earth, over the frozen trees, and the broad, icy bosom of the Neva, stretching endlessly into the blue distance beyond St. Petersburg. Each patch of colour stood out with peculiar vividness under the keen pure blue of the sky. The iron palings of the park, and the bare boughs of the trees showed like thick lines ruled in ink upon the brilliant whiteness of the snow. The crowded pavements and shifting traffic of St. Petersburg looked, in the brightness of this curious Northern glamour, like the changing surface of a kaleidoscope.

There were a lot of little children in the Alexandra Park, gliding swiftly down the sides of the snow-mountain in tiny gay-coloured sledges. Their rosy faces peeped from the soft fur of their hoods. Their voices sounded in the clear air like the metallic tinkling of little sleigh bells. At the foot of the mountain stood a group of bonnes and governesses awaiting them.

A row of “mamkas” were sitting upon one of the seats at the side of the path. They wore bright blue or red bonnets according to the sex of their foster-children. Long coloured ribbons streamed from the backs of their bonnets, and each nurse carried her charge upon a pillow.

Annushka sailed in among them, bearing the little “barchuk” upon his silken cushion. She walked proudly because she knew that her appearance was always something of an event. Her “sarafan,” the skirt with the shoulder-straps, was made of a softer and finer material than that of any “mamka” present. Her “kokoshnik,” the beautiful scarlet bonnet, was of velvet and was decked with at least thirty yards of ribbon, and her handsome cloak was lined with squirrels’ fur.

The envious, admiring “mamkas” would nudge one another

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as Annushka passed them, and whisper with stealthy glances, "The barin is a great official."

"Nay, I've heard he is a Minister."

"He dines with the Tsar—Little Father."

"Ah!" . . .

It is a fine thing to be "mamka" in a rich gentleman's house in St. Petersburg. One has nothing to do but to eat and drink as much as possible to give rich milk to the little "barchuk"; and one must be careful not to tire or worry oneself so that it may not be affected. These are easy duties; and Annushka spent many hours in sitting by the "barchuk's" cradle while he slept, with her hands folded in her lap, and busy thoughts chasing one another through her brain.

It seemed to her incredible that a short time ago she had considered herself lucky if her dinner of black bread were garnished with a morsel of salt herring. At home in the village Annushka had been a person of no importance whatever. Her husband was the youngest of three brothers, and she, as the youngest sister-in-law, had been tyrannised over by the slatternly, spiteful wives of the elder brothers. Marya, the eldest, was a tall, lean, angular woman with a bony red face, and a high, shrill voice. She was perpetually scolding, and when anything provoked her specially she would fall into a violent fit of screaming. Marfa, the younger sister-in-law, was a short, broad woman, with blunt features and malicious eyes. She took a special pleasure in irritating Marya into her paroxysms of rage, and very often they would fly at one another, and the tiny hut was converted into pandemonium. When the men came home from work, all differences among the women were settled by a few hard, indiscriminate blows. But it was worst of all when the men started wrangling and brawling among themselves. Annushka's husband, Ivan, was the best of the three brothers. He was more industrious and less quarrelsome than the others and did not drink so much. He was often kind to Annushka and generally managed to protect her in the domestic scimmages. They had married one another because their voices went well together and because they both were poor. Annushka was an orphan, and had been brought up by the charity of a neighbour. Ivan approached her one summer evening when a group of girls and lads in the village had been singing in chorus together, and said to her:

"I sing true, and your voice is very tuneful. I'm the youngest son, and you won't even bring me a pillow. If you marry me, I'll see to it that your life is sweet."

And Annushka agreed, ostensibly because of these striking

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arguments. But perhaps her rosy cheeks and round blue eyes and Ivan's broad shoulders and thick black curls had something to do with it.

And really, during the first year of her married life, things had not gone so badly. But then the grandfather was still alive. The grandfather had a certain restraining influence over his disorderly family, and a very effective means of keeping the peace while he was in the cottage. He was very strong, and he had an enormous voice, although he was an old man, and he only needed to raise it a little to produce a terrified stillness all around him. When the grandfather shouted, “Silence!” it seemed as if the tones of his voice rushed forth and clattered like heavy stones against the roof and walls of the cottage; and it produced such a painful throbbing in the ear-drums that the snarling women were glad to shut their mouths and clap their hands over their ears. During the long winter evenings he sat at the table with the lamp upon it, carving little wooden toys and animals for the market. If the slightest sound of squabbling arose in the cottage the grandfather needed but to glance up over his spectacles and clear his throat and it immediately died away again. He was always kind to Annushka, and when she sat by his side during these peaceful interludes, embroidering little mats and towels to be sold in St. Petersburg, she felt that, after all, she had not so much cause to regret her marriage.

But when the grandfather died things rapidly began to grow worse. The men went less regularly to work, and drank more. Food became scarce, and the brawling in the tiny cottage was unchecked. Some time before Annushka's black-eyed, brown-faced baby, little Ivan, was born two years after her marriage, the family was in a woeful plight. The men sometimes loitered for whole days together near the village, doing no work and drinking in the evening. The two elder sisters-in-law wrangled incessantly, and Annushka was the recipient of many bitter taunts, and not a few hard blows, for bringing another mouth into the family to feed. At times there was no food at all in the house, and sometimes they went for several days with nothing more tasty than a hunk of coarse black bread.

When little Ivan was born the women were seized with an idea which gradually absorbed them: Why should Annushka not go to St. Petersburg, to be a “mamka” and send her money and presents home for their support? They themselves were both childless or they would have gone long ago. Annushka, in spite of her recent privations and hard treatment had still retained her round rosy cheeks. She had worked in the fields

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every summer of her life, and it had made her sound and hardy. Her blue eyes were very bright and innocent, and a lady seeking good milk for her baby could hardly make a better choice. The two sisters thawed towards Annushka under the sunny influence of their calculations. They began to caress and flatter her, naming her "supporter" and "benefactress" and vowing that the life of little Ivan should be like one big strawberry, so sweet would they make it for him during his mother's absence. But Annushka cried bitterly at the thought of leaving the brown-faced baby. She had scarcely let it out of her arms since its birth. It nestled warm against her heart at night when she lay in her corner on the oven; she carried it in her bosom when she went about her work in the day-time. When she felt it sucking at her breast she was filled with a passionate delight which brought the tears into her eyes. Annushka had given and taken very little love in her hard-working life. Her energies had chiefly been devoted to fending for herself, clinging to her little share in the distribution of this world's goods to prevent its being snatched away from her. But the funny brown baby had filled her torpid little heart with a warm glow of love, like a flood of sunshine.

The big Ivan was gradually growing heavy and besotted, and indifferent as the result of his increased addiction to drink. But at first he made a firm stand against the notion of Annushka's departure.

"My wife is not a cow," he said, "and the baby wants his mother."

But the two sisters-in-law nagged at him incessantly, one in each ear, never ceasing to bewail his obstinacy, and recount the advantages they would all forego because of it, and, at last, roused to a sudden fit of fury he shouted at them :

"Let her go, then, you accursed serpents. Anything to stop your rasping tongues !"

So they had packed her off, and now she had been for nearly three months in St. Petersburg. She had never ceased to wonder since her arrival. But she wondered most of all at herself, at the astonishing change in her life, and the magnitude of her possessions. At one time her wildest dream had been to own a feather pillow and half a dozen sheets so that her sisters-in-law would respect her, and would not dare to beat her, while now two cupboards in the nursery were filled with her property. Every "mamka" should receive by right a plentiful stock of clothing and bed-linen when entering upon her duties; and in this case the barina had been extremely lavish, adding numerous presents to Annushka's outfit. Every visitor who came into the

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nursery to see the “barchuk” left the “mamka” a handsome sum of money. The letters from home written by Marfa, the only one of the family able to write, were worded with great deference and respect. Ivanushka, was in them, invested with the dignified title, Ivan-Ivanovitch (Ivan, son of Ivan). She would be like a queen when she returned to the village, and the family would fall at her feet when she opened her box.

It seemed to Annushka that everybody in the barin’s household was fat and sleek and leisurely. The very porter at the hall-door was as round as a barrel, and his good living oozed out of his shiny skin and the corners of his twinkling eyes. His gold-braided scarlet uniform was so gorgeous and dazzling that Annushka, on first beholding him, involuntarily crossed herself, thinking that he must be one of the saints of God stepped out of the holy “Ikön.” He lived in a kind of cupboard under the staircase, which contained a bed, a table and a stove. One day, on the eve of a festival, he took her by the hand as she was entering the house with the “barchuk” and, leading her to the big settee in the hall lifted the seat, and displayed to her astonished eyes a quantity of eatables such as she had never in her life beheld all at once.

“That is my larder,” he said to her with a smile upon his round red face, “and to-morrow I shall feast.”

“God sees it,” said Annushka to the “mamkas” in the park, “he had got chickens there, and herrings, and pickled mushrooms, and more eggs than you could count in an hour.”

The coachman was just as sleek and shiny as the porter, and in public life he appeared to be much fatter; because a private coachman in St. Petersburg is swathed around in rolls of cloth beneath his livery, or thickly padded in order to acquire the bulk which is prescribed by fashion. Annushka was not aware of this, and she got quite a shock one day when she beheld the colossus unwind himself in the courtyard with the help of two of the stable-men, and emerge from his wrappings quite an ordinary size.

When Annushka and the “barchuk” were taken to drive with the barina in the luxurious little fur-decked sledge the coachman completely obstructed the view. He wore a big gold-laced, four-cornered hat, and his hair, as fair and glossy as that of the barina herself, was carefully combed and oiled, and hung in large round curls, nearly to his shoulders. His beard, as fine as floss silk fell to his capacious waist-band. His face was as soft and pink as that of a tender young damsel, and in the middle of his enormous back was fastened a little round clock, so that the barina could see

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the time, without disturbing the soft furs over her bosom by drawing out her watch.

The sledge and its occupants made a vivid picture against the snow. The horses were as white and silky as summer clouds, and they were covered with a bright green netting to prevent the snow being kicked up into the riders' faces. The barina was all muffled up in soft white furs, with her yellow hair gleaming under her snowy cap, like buttercups against a swan's wing, and her pretty gentle face all rosy pink with frost. Annushka's plump cheeks glowed like a pair of poppies, and the gorgeous ribbons on her scarlet bonnet streamed out behind her like a floating rainbow. The "barchuk" was smothered in fur and hidden from sight on these occasions. Behind the sledge upon a little footboard stood an imposing body-guard, clad in a long Caucasian coat of scarlet, trapped with dull Caucasian silver, a silver-sheathed dagger thrust into his belt, and a high Caucasian cap of astrakhan upon his head. How swiftly the little sledge flashed over the snow, and how valiantly the fat coachman urged the horses to their utmost speed, leaning far forward in the approved fashion, his knees apart and a rein in either hand! Everybody turned to look after it as it sped along the quay beside the frozen Neva, a patch of flying colour, lost to sight before one could think of a remark to make.

Annushka had grown to love the gentle barina. She was very young and tall and fair and slender, and at first Annushka stood in awe of her, because she looked so queenly and was so richly dressed.

"When she comes at night to kiss the 'barchuk'" said Annushka to the "mamkas" in the park, "she shines from her hair, and her breast, and her hands and feet as though God's angels had kissed her."

She loved to escape from her busy life into the nursery, and she would sit for a long time fondling the "barchuk," chatting with Annushka, laughing merrily at her stories of village life. She asked a great many questions about little Ivan, and made glowing plans with Annushka for his future. Her bright eyes would fill with tears when Annushka told her how sorrowful it had made her to leave the brown-faced baby, and how bitterly she had cried at parting with him, and she would murmur to the "barchuk" with her lips upon his cheek.

"We must make up to him, you and I, Petrushka, for stealing his little mother from him."

The barin was much older than his wife, and to Annushka he seemed very terrible. He wore a military uniform, and though he was small in stature he was very broad, and his chest was

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padded to such an extent that it looked tremendous, and it was covered with a perfect wilderness of orders and medals. His stiff, cropped, iron-grey hair stood up perfectly straight all over his head, and he frowned so dreadfully that there was a deep cleft between his thick black eyebrows. He spoke in a very harsh and irritable voice and the servants stood in terror of him. As for Annushka she fled wildly with the “barchuk” anywhere out of sight when she heard him stumping along the corridors.

And so Annushka lived in the barin’s household, feeding upon the best, sleeping soundly at night, waited upon hand and foot. And she was very loyal to the little “barchuk” and loved him dearly. But often when he lay at her breast, she shut her eyes and tried to imagine that the little brown Ivanushka was suckling there, and the thought would send a thrill and rush of tenderness all through her. In the bottom of her heart she counted the days until she would be free to fly to him and stay her hunger of longing.

One evening the nursery-maid put her head in at the door and said to Annushka.

“There’s a letter for you, ‘Mamka.’ Cook is waiting to read it to you.”

Annushka rose and went into the kitchen, forbidding the girl to leave the nursery until her return.

The kitchen was large and hot and smoky, and one corner of it was partitioned off by a red curtain behind which the men servants slept. The fat cook was sitting with folded arms on her stool before the table. The three lackeys, divested of their white kid gloves were playing cards at a table in the corner. Loud snores came from behind the red curtain, and the sound of giggling from the back staircase which led out of the kitchen, where the maidservants were disporting with the stablemen and courtyard servants.

The cook took up the letter and commenced to read. Her face was heavy and stupid, and her pale round eyes were as expressionless as those of a fish. She read in a monotonous indifferent voice, stopping every now and then to grunt and pant:

“Dearly loved and respected sister-in-law, Anna-Efeemovna. We wish you in this letter good health and success in all your undertakings. Also your husband, Ivan-Kusmitch, greets you. He has got work in Klim, and wishes you good health and success in all your undertakings. Likewise greet you your dearly loved sister-in-law, Marya-Nicholævna, and your beloved brothers-in-law, Stephan-Danilovitch and Anisim-Petrovitch. Also your honourable son, Ivan-Ivanovitch greets you and wishes you good

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health and success in all your undertakings. Our gossip Matrona-Selivanovna has had dead twins. Likewise greets you Avdotya-Nikitishna. Our neighbour, Vassily Zukich, also greets you. Their pig has got the ringworm. Your brothers-in-law Stephan-Danilovitch and Anisim-Petrovitch, and your husband Ivan-Kusmitch were drunk on Sunday on the money you sent last week. Dashka greets you, and her son has been taken for soldiering. We have no milk for Ivan-Ivanovitch, but yesterday I gave him some tea. The Popadya (priest's wife) is with child again, and with God's help that will make nine; and Grisha the pedlar's son had wed with Pelagaya. We sit in our coats because the men bring us no logs, each saying it is the other's turn to go to the forest. I have wrapped Ivan-Ivanovitch up, and he is lying in a basket. He does not cry at all. His face is blue and we think it is because he is cold. Likewise greets you"

The monotonous voice continued reading, but Annushka did not hear another word.

She felt as if something heavy had suddenly been placed upon her head, and her ears were deafened. The words, "we think he is cold, we think he is cold," kept throbbing in her brain. She rose slowly to her feet and stood for a moment as though bewildered. Then she went quickly out of the kitchen and along the corridor back into the nursery. She stood silently in the middle of the nursery again and the words continued to repeat themselves, "we think he is cold." Cold! with no fire in the hut and a temperature which, the peasants say, freezes their beards and eyebrows till you can chip pieces off them with a hammer, and makes the bugs drop off the wall of an unheated room with a rap, as stiff as tin-tacks, while you can break a window with the body of a beetle! Ivanuska's little face, blue and pinched rose up before his mother's eyes. She cast herself to the ground and began to cry aloud, in agony, with the loud, shrill, monotonous cry of the suffering peasant-woman. The sound penetrated into the kitchen and startled the cook, who had been gazing in vacant surprise at the table since Annushka's abrupt departure, without an idea as to what had caused it. She got up, and calling some of the maidservants into the kitchen from the back stairs heavily signalled to them to listen. They made their way, a frightened group, towards the nursery, and cautiously opened the door. With scared faces they watched Annushka writhing in her distress. It was such a sudden and extraordinary outbreak on her part that they were frightened to go near her. The cook looked round at them, her light, fishy eyes distended with fear, and whispered, panting,

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“She’s struck. It’s God’s anger.”

The barin and barina were at a ball and would not return before the early morning. One of the girls hurried away to fetch the gate-keeper’s wife, who had an ugly, sour face, but was known to be a woman of decision and action.

She came and looked critically at the stricken “mamka.”

“Pig!” she said, “she’s been drinking.”

And she commenced to scold with slow savage energy, as only the Russian woman knows how to scold. Her voice poured out, harsh, grating, excited, and her command of abusive epithets was extraordinary. This treatment was natural and familiar to Annushka. It was reminiscent of the atmosphere in which her life had been passed, and she unconsciously yielded to its influence. She gradually grew quieter, and rising to her feet began to smooth back her tumbled hair. She had never been accustomed to look for sympathy in her sorrows, and so now she said nothing. She sat down on a chair. Her face seemed to have grown suddenly hard and thin, and she looked with sullen hatred at the scolding woman.

The latter, out of breath and flushed with victory, nodded triumphantly at the group of servants. She stood for a moment her arms akimbo, watching Annushka in silence.

“She’ll be quiet enough now,” she said after a moment.

She turned and went out of the room, and the others followed her. They remained for some minutes whispering in the corridor, and then they moved away and there was silence.

Annushka got up and went into the “barchuk’s” bedroom. She sent the nursery-girl away and lay down on her bed without undressing. For hours she lay staring into the darkness. Her face kept wrinkling up with the desire to cry, but she sniffed her tears away and bit the sheet to choke her sobs. At one in the morning the “barchuk” awoke and began to seek his food. Annushka’s tears fell fast as she sat down with him upon the low chair, and laid him against her breast.

“It’s you that are drinking his life away,” she said to the “barchuk,” and for the first time in his life she laid him back in the cradle again without kissing him.

At five o’clock Annushka suddenly jumped from her bed, and lit a candle. She hastily combed her hair and plaited it again, and then she put on her boots. She took her cloak out of the wardrobe, and then she lifted the “barchuk” once more from his cradle.

“Now, drink your fill,” she said to him.

When the “barchuk” was asleep in his cradle again, Annushka

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tied her shawl over her head, and put her cloak on. She crept noiselessly out of the room and down the corridor. She could hear the loud snoring of the menservants coming from the kitchen and the sound burst full upon her when she opened the door. She stole across the kitchen to the door leading on to the back stairs. She slipped the bolts back very carefully, and gently turned the key. Closing the door behind her she went down the stairs into the courtyard. The gatekeeper had gone off duty at four o'clock, and the courtyard was empty. She went through the gate out into the street. There was a sledge standing near the kerbstone, and the driver was asleep upon his box. She awakened him and told him to drive her to the Warsaw Station. There was no train to Klim, the town nearest to her village until seven. She sat down to wait in the furthest corner of the dirty bar in the third-class waiting-room. She pulled her shawl forward over her face and huddled up under her cloak to make herself as small as possible. There was scarcely anybody in the station except the brown-coated, wooden-faced gendarmes who were already posted with their rifles at the various entrances to the platform, and pacing backwards and forwards in the big central hall.

It seemed an eternity to Annushka as she sat waiting, and every new footstep caused her heart to bound with fear. If they found her they would take her back again, for the "barchuk" could not be left to starve, and it would be extremely difficult to induce him to take strange food. The servants would not notice her absence until seven, when her morning gruel was brought in. And by seven she would be already in the train. If only the "barchuk" would sleep soundly until morning as was his custom, and not arouse the household by fruitless crying!

It was a journey of three hours to Klim. The slowness of the train made Annushka desperate. She imagined she could feel the tiny body of Ivanushka already in her arms, and her heart began to beat with anxiety and intense impatience.

At last Klim was reached. The country stretching around was flat and covered with snow which looked grey and leaden under the sullen winter sky.

Annushka set off to walk to Malinovka. It was about three miles distant. Soon she was overtaken by an old peasant in a sledge. He had been to the market with logs, and he was now returning to a village beyond Malinovka. He would pass Malinovka, and he willingly agreed to take her with him in the sledge. They jolted slowly along over the uneven snow. The horse was small and weak and there were traces of terrible wounds upon

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his back. The old peasant talked continually in his quavering voice, now urging the little horse forward with arguments and remonstrances as if it were a reasoning being, now turning to acquaint Annushka with the gossip of the countryside—the priest at Semenovka had died of drink, the frost had not been so severe in these parts for ten years, the small-pox had broken out in Varnaki.

Annushka scarcely noticed what he said. Her back and ribs were sore with bumping against the wooden sledge. The tips of her fingers stung so painfully because of the frost, that she was obliged to grind them one against another to keep up the circulation. Her nose was numb save for a painful prick in the end of it, and every now and then she leaned over and scooped up a handful of snow to rub it in and save it from being frost-bitten. Her head was giddy with the thought that she was drawing nearer to Ivanushka, that shortly she would see him and be able to touch him.

At Malinovka Annushka got out of the sledge, and, thanking the old peasant, walked quickly up the village street. As she drew near the cottage she saw her sister-in-law, Marfa, stooping over something outside the cottage. She looked up suddenly and caught sight of Annushka. She sprang to her feet and stared aghast at her for a moment, and then without a sign of greeting she dived into the cottage. When Annushka reached the cottage it was empty. An open basket was lying upon the floor near the stove. Annushka threw herself upon her knees beside it with a cry.

Ivanushka was lying in the basket. His face was grey in colour with a tinge of blue around the eyes and mouth. His lids were pale with spots of blue upon them. They were drawn down half over his eyes and the rims of white showed beneath. There was an air of unutterable distance about him. It seemed to his mother that he was in some way unreal, that however far she stretched her arms towards him she could never reach him.

With a clutch of desperate fear at her heart she put out a trembling hand and touched him. The contact of the little body was reassuring, and she lifted him from the basket and took him in her arms. She kissed the little face and head all over, and eagerly whispered his name, “ Ivanushka ! Ivanushka ! ” She sat down with him upon a low wooden stool, covering him with the warm folds of her fur-lined cloak. She hastily unwound the grimy rags in which he was enveloped. With a beating heart she began to rub the tiny, stiff, cold limbs. She looked into his face and the feeling that he was infinitely far from her, that he was in

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some way unreal, overwhelmed her with terror again. She stood up and looked around her wildly with a desire to shriek for help. She tore open the bosom of her shirt and thrust him against her naked breast. The touch of the stiff unyielding little body sent a rending shiver through her frame. It was like a slab of marble against the warmth of her flesh. She sank on to the stool again and rocked herself backwards and forwards. She began to moan in a low despairing voice. Suddenly she felt a spasmodic jerk in the tiny limbs against her breast, the head turned sideways and the icy cheek was pressed against her heart. Eagerly she snatched the cloak away and looked at Ivanushka again. But the little face was just as grey and still and terrifying.

Outside the window a little group of people had gathered. Her sisters-in-law who had fled at her coming had spread the news of it in the village. They were afraid to enter and they tried to peep into the interior of the cottage.

The door opened and somebody came in. It was Ivan. He stood behind her silently and she did not look at him.

"You have let your child die. God will curse you," she said to him in a strange, passionless voice.

He did not answer, but he frowned suddenly. There was a look of sullen pain and fear in his eyes, and he tore and plucked convulsively at the sheepskin cap he held.

"The Mother of God will turn from you. Your father would have cursed you had he lived," said Annushka again.

"I walked seven versts to get milk for him when there was none in the village," Ivan said, huskily. "I've carried him all night when he was ailing."

He still stood motionless, but his broad shoulders seemed to shrink suddenly together, and his head was bowed and sunk between them like that of a culprit pleading guilty and awaiting sentence.

"You let him freeze because you were too lazy to get wood."

"It was in anger," Ivan muttered. "We quarrelled and I went to the town. I didn't think. . . . I didn't know."

His voice broke. Annushka spoke again :

"You drank the money I sent for him. Did you think I meant it for your tipsy louts of brothers and their devilish wives ? "

"What can one do but drink in such a life as this ? " Ivan said hoarsely. He stood up straight and his eyes shone with anger. "What life do I have ? No peace. No joy. It's like a madhouse here." . . .

Annushka said nothing. She began to rock herself and moan and sob again. Ivan went to the window and stood looking out

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into the courtyard. The sound of Annushka's sobbing filled the room. He raised one hand and pressed it to his eyes. Then he dropped it again and clenched his fists. He strode back savagely to his wife and struck her a blow on her bowed head.

“Don't madden me, woman, with your whining,” he shouted, and rushed out of the cottage, his face wild and distorted like that of one insane.

There came the sound of a sledge bell which drew near and ceased. Voices began to speak eagerly outside the door. Annushka did not move. Her head was bowed nearly to her knees. She had scarcely felt the blow upon it. She clasped the little body of Ivanushka close against her heart. The door opened again and a delicious fragrance floated into the cottage with the frosty air. Somebody knelt upon the floor beside her and put an arm around her, and there was a sweep of soft fur against her cheek. It did not seem at all strange to her that the barina should appear suddenly at her side. She was beginning to be exhausted by the intensity of her grief. A voice whispered in her ear,

“Let us see him, Annushka.”

She raised her head and saw that there was a strange gentleman in the room. He had come in with the barina. She dragged her cloak around her, tightly. The light of mad fear leapt into her eyes.

“You shall never touch him,” she said, hoarsely.

The barina still knelt by her side with a hand upon her shoulder, and she said :

“We have not come to take him from you. We do not wish to harm him. The barin is a doctor, and if anything can be done to save Ivanushka he will know what to do. Annushka ! if he can be saved, the barin will save him.”

With gentle persuasion she induced the mother to lay the little body across her knee for the doctor to examine it. The upturned eyes and little open mouth seemed to reproach them timidly ; to ask why they, who should have sheltered him, had let him suffer. The lady's tears began to fall. It seemed shameful to her that she should stand in his presence dressed in her rich clothes and furs. It was as if she had deliberately used her wealth and power to destroy this tiny creature who was so helpless and so poor.

“It is too late,” the doctor said, and gently lifted the little body from the mother's knee. “He is dead.”

Annushka leapt to her feet with a shriek at the word, and flung aside the barina's restraining hand. She began to scream hysterical curses upon those who had caused the baby's death.

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Her cries were heard outside the cottage, and the neighbours ran from all sides and joined the awestruck group near the window. She tore her hair and struck herself wildly on the breast in the abandonment of desperation. The barina stood pale and frightened. She had never seen anything so terrible. Annushka sank, gasping and exhausted upon the wooden bench, and laid her head upon the table. Her body heaved with strangling sobs.

When she at last grew quiet the barina leant over her and said to her gently :

“Come back with me, Annushka. You have nothing to do here now. We will take Ivanushka and go back together, and I will look after you all your life. I will send for your husband. Let me make what amends I can to you for losing the poor little baby.”

The doctor went outside to commission the neighbours to make a little coffin for Ivanushka, and they set about it very willingly. They silently made way when Annushka came out of the cottage and took her seat in the sledge. She had pulled her shawl over her face, and she spoke to nobody, and did not look up. The rough-hewn little box which held Ivanushka's body was placed in her lap. The neighbours crowded round to perform what little friendly services they might, and refused to take money for the little coffin.

And so Ivanushka travelled to St. Petersburg ; and he was given a funeral such as no peasant baby had ever had before. The little rough box made by the peasants was exchanged for a sumptuous little white coffin which was dragged to the churchyard by four white horses in a hearse of pure white. Three mutes in new white robes and streamers walked on either side of the hearse, and the three priests who followed it in gold-coloured vestments and with flowing hair might have been especially chosen for their air of sanctity and prosperity.

Perhaps this was a consolation to Annushka. Nevertheless, the “barchuk's” digestion was upset for a long while because of the violence of her grief. She still lives in the barin's household, and perhaps she will live there till she is an old woman, and be nurse to the “barchuk's” children. When inquiries were made after Ivan in the village it appeared that he had left it and had not returned, and so far he has not been heard of.

Annushka lives like a queen. Her slightest wish is gratified, and she is treated with the utmost consideration and tenderness by the barina. But she would cast her easy life to the winds, and go joyfully back to poverty and hardship if it could but be brightened for her by the smile of the little lost Ivanushka.

Two Essays

By Elizabeth Martindale

I. THE SPIRIT OF MELODY

A CHILD'S voice singing awoke me this morning and I thought it must be later than usual for it was little Effie Sands on her way to school.

But when I was thoroughly aroused some of the details of Effie Sands' life occurred to me. After all it was not remarkable that she should be on her way to school at half-past seven when school begins only at nine. Effie's mother and father are both very poor and very unfortunate. Her mother goes out to work as well as her father; somehow or other although he is very industrious he cannot make enough to keep the small family of three. So on certain days Effie is turned out of doors early. The door is locked from the outside by the black browed, brown eyed, tall, loquacious woman; the starved looking, stunted man, the husband, with his deep-lined anxious face, toils silently up the hill, his food basket slung on his back, and Effie straggles behind, merrily clutching in her hot little palm a halfpenny which she will spend at the "shop" on sweets—"the loveliest things in the world." Both the mother and father go their own ways—money must be earned and the child, nearly seven, can very well take care of herself.

It is a dull morning. It has been raining intermittently in the night and now it is foggy, without wind or sunlight. There is a chaffinch in the ash-tree over my roof pink-pinking in a patient manner. I wonder what he does it for, it seems to me to lead to nothing; but I have no doubt there is a reason, and I am too lazy or too blind to find it out. Again Effie Sands' strident voice pervades everything, and drowns the notes of the chaffinch. It is a very happy sound, so happy and irresponsible that it might be called almost beautiful. She is making up the song as she goes on, I cannot hear the words but that does not matter.

I see her sometimes in the afternoons when she is going home. One day, when she had been watching me for some time, she

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said suddenly : " Where's your mother ? My mother doesn't love me, she beats me ! " The recital was quite spontaneous, as if it were the most natural of things. It troubled her very little, in fact she seemed proud to be able to tell me about it. As I lay listening to her I could imagine her very well creeping up the steep lane below the wood. She always wears a marvellous accumulation of clothes ; all very shabby and too large and long for her. She has a ragged, red dress and a black coat with a marked waistline that comes far too low on the poor little figure. But her ears are nicely covered in a brown hood with bits of lace here and there and at any rate she cannot be cold.

She has lost her front upper teeth and as she is always smiling it is the first thing that I notice. Her eyes are small, grey and sharp, her skin pale, her hair very black and cut short. She is like her mother, who looks as though she had gipsy blood, and as I watch her I wonder what kind of a future the poor little mite has before her. She is more attractive now probably than she ever will be. She will very soon lose her merry glance, her genuine smile of delight when she is given a flower ; her frankness and her winning lack of restraint. She is in her way so perfect now ; and her perfection itself is so developed, so mature that the thought of her having to grow into something else makes me ponder over the absurdity of the world.

Why cannot she be allowed to remain as she is, why should she be made to learn things, understand things, feel things—things that will make her sad, hard and old and in the end wear her out ?

She is still singing and she does not seem to have got very far on her way up the hill. Why should she hurry, *she* knows well enough how early it is.

When I was at the seaside after my visit to Belgium I went every morning to hear the music in the winter shelter. It was quite ordinary music such as one hears at any good theatre ; it was well selected and well performed by a small orchestra and it gave me many happy moments. When I got up in the morning and looked out on to the sunny sparkling sea I hoped I should hear that day at least one air that would thrill my veins sufficiently to make me sway my head from side to side in time with the lilting tune. The Bohemian melodies, with their syncopated bass notes beating a throbbing rhythm to the sweet wail of the first violins, were what moved me the most. My taste in music is of the simplest—I like a tune if it is a good tune ; as long as it has an appealing quality it may be boisterous, merry, plaintive, tragic or wild, I am equally pleased. Tunes with that appealing

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quality are such marvellous things that sometimes I can hardly believe they have been earth-born. Where do they come from? What are they made of? How many more are there still to come and where are they waiting?

Perhaps this is why they have such a weird power over us. They come to us with supernatural qualities and they work on our poor little emotions and excite us to such an extent that we have moments listening to them in which we think that we ourselves are transformed into creatures no longer mortal.

We sat, a little crowd of listeners, very high up above the sea. The sun was always warm; we were sheltered from the north winds, the cliff sunk steep and sharp beneath us, the foot-paths zig-zagged here and there amongst the close bushy fir-trees, and very far down was the sea, pearly and rippling, a little blue in the foreground and greyish-white on the misty horizon. The sun was hot, scorching sometimes, and the reflection of it on the water would make me either close my eyes or turn my head towards the shade. There were fishing smacks, little skiffs on the sea and every day at twelve from behind the grey stone pier the Channel steamer glided out, very black and white, leaving a trail of murky smoke in the clear air and a white line of foam in the water behind her.

We were a curious assembly. I watched the people a good deal, and many used to come every day. After a time I seemed to understand them very well, as if I had known them for years.

There was a couple, father and daughter, both pale, dark and Hebrew. She crocheted intently while he talked. He had been ill, he was retiring from the city—that is why they were there. The mother was dead, the girl was nice looking, slim and young; she was contented with her existence, more contented certainly than he. But he would pull through this rather trying time very well. I could see it in his eye. There was a kind of gleam in it as he watched his daughter working and he talked to her confidingly. After all it cannot be an unpleasant life to have a father to listen to and care for, to have one's life clearly mapped out for a certain number of years, to have sufficient freedom, money and affection and to know all the time that one is doing one's "duty."

They listened to the music as much as any one but they had all the time the air of not doing so. They never beat time and I never saw them applaud, but they always stayed until the end.

There were many invalids. I wonder why invalids always have to flock together. Doctors seem to think that an invalid enjoys most of all the society of other invalids and they tell them

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to go to the seaside and get cheered up by the sight of others more ill and miserable than themselves. I think doctors like to see a parade of bath-chairs, they like to be able to stroll along, greeting their patients with exuberance: "Good morning"—the hat is lifted and the step becomes still more buoyant; "I'm so glad to see you out this beautiful day." And the thought passes through the mind that one day the doctor, himself an invalid, may be greeted with lusty sympathy.

If I were ill again, as a matter of fact I am still considered so by some and a fraud by others, I should remain just where I am in spite of all the doctors in the world. Where one can live happily and peacefully there one may as well be ill and die; it is a great mistake to give way quite meekly to the first suggestion at these crucial moments. I have found that out by experience. When I am ill again I will never venture in another bath-chair, never be tortured by the corkscrew-like pain of a lost independence that every passer-by manages to turn a little deeper into an already enfeebled spirit. I will ask to be carried on a shutter or a door out here on to my little lawn in the sun with a pillow under my head and a blanket spread over me. There I will ask to be left in peace so that after a space away from pitying glances I may be able to imagine myself once again in perfect health enjoying the green trees and blue sky above me as I used to delight in them when I was a child.

People who are always healthy do not realise how mortifying it is to be ill and to be as it were a dumping-ground for promiscuous pity. And when I am dying I shall ask for music—violins, or best of all an orchestra.

I saw no bath-chairs in the winter shelter. I imagine the bath-chair men considered it too much to pull them up and down the inclined path, or else the music may have been considered too exciting for a patient.

But many who could walk came. There was a young man who contrived to get about with the aid of two sticks. I heard him say one day it had been a football accident. It would never be all right again. He was well dressed, the son of a wealthy draper in London, a self-made man who could afford to keep his son at a healthy seaside establishment. The son did nothing but enjoy himself with novels, cards and an occasional girl, but these were none of them serious vices for the poor fellow who was incurably ill. It was just a life to be frittered away and the lilting airs in the winter shelter helped it along its tedious course.

There were many old men too. Mostly men with dogs, fox terriers, that yelped, barked, and behaved in an obstreperous way

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much to the amusement of all the elderly ladies. Many of the men were retired military heroes with sallow complexions, deep lines about their thin faces and tight breeches around their stiffening knees. On cold days they came in thick ulsters always worn open to show the trimness of the waistcoat. Dogs, carpentering and colds were the favourite topics of their conversation.

The elderly ladies clustered together in little gangs along the rows of chairs. They, more than any, allowed their feelings to appear on the surface. If a pretty child appeared they gave vent to ecstatic admiration; they all seemed to have the same tone of voice and the same polite expressions, and they would bravely mark time with decorous feet and applaud loudly at the appropriate moments.

One day I went there with my friend the pale mother and her mercurial child. On arriving I noticed that every one's attention was fixed on us and particularly on the child. Simply clothed in sailor dress, striped jersey and striped socks, she had a particular charm that day. The music pleased her immensely, and she sat by us waving her white gloved hands to the time, her grey eyes very large all the while. Her soft hair waved over her broad temples on to her shoulders like the drooping wings of a bird. She had been learning lately the steps of the hornpipe at school, and I could see her little feet were longing to be at work. The orchestra was playing some snatches of *Carmen*; the child could not sit still any more on her chair and slipped away from us.

She disappeared inside the shelter; we were sitting outside, and presently I noticed two of the old gentlemen in ulsters pause in the open doorway both wearing suddenly real smiles of enjoyment. I half guessed the cause and I left the mother alone engrossed in a book.

I stood behind the old gentlemen; there were only one or two other people sitting on chairs inside, those I imagine who were afraid of sitting out of doors in the winter. A poorly dressed old woman was standing up against the door-post too. I had seen her often there, she could not afford to pay for a chair and she came constantly. She was watching with much the same expression as the old military men, and these three filled up the doorway.

I peered over their shoulders and then I could see the little sailor-clad figure dancing, pirouetting, swaying with child-like innocent alluring gestures to the music. Her little black boots tapped the wood blocked floor as light as any bird's; her arms were folded in front, sailor-fashion, in her thick reefer coat, her soft

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curls under her dark biretta danced loosely about her shoulders, sometimes over her eyes, and her cheeks were a deeper pink. She was enjoying herself thoroughly, flitting about amongst the chairs and not entirely unconscious of the attention the old men were paying her. Even the orchestra enjoyed the entertainment, the conductor making a sign for repetition without creating a pause.

I kept myself deliberately concealed. It was better that I should be able to appear quite unconscious of the child's escapade either to the mother or the child herself, and before the music came to an end I went away and sat down again. The child came demurely to us; for the moment she looked as if she had never danced in her life.

"I've been making up a new dance, mummy," she said, and she began to expound it in words. She wanted us to come and watch her, to ask the men to play again.

But that was the end. We all stood up for "God save the King"; the dogs trotted off, the elderly ladies made appointments for tea, every one was on the move with changed expressions, less dreamy, more matter-of-fact. The melodies had worked their spell for the time and now there was luncheon to think about and the commonplace details and necessities of existence. My spirits sank a little then for a moment or two.

I suppose that is why Effie Sands sings on her way to school. She feels unconsciously that life is not a happy affair, and as she is young and instinctively very wise she knows she must have music in some form or other. I have no doubt she would prefer to be sung or played to; she would far rather let her feet loose and dance out her merriment as the little sailor figure did in the winter shelter. She is after all very much in the same situation as the elderly ladies and gentlemen, the girls not quite young still and longing for husbands, the invalids and the delicate young man. They all have much to endure and melodies help them to endure patiently.

II. THE ART OF ENJOYMENT

It is raining very heavily, a sudden spring shower. When I was in the garden a few moments ago, the sun was shining prismatically; the clouds, low in the air like smoke, were racing lightly over me, and there was a warm wind that seemed to bear a charm with it because all the winds we have had lately have been so fierce and unkind.

I am lying half on my bed resting for a little while before it is dark. I have been planting in the garden with Wedman and I am tired. My hands are covered with soil and my hair is strag-

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gling about my face. We have been replanting trees, some filberts and hollies. Down at the corner of the wood these hollies have been nibbled mercilessly by a rabbit or a hare, and as they happen to be in a conspicuous position I have had to change them. I suppose the new ones will have the same fate, but I hope for the best as we are not likely to have any more snow now and there must surely be nicer things springing up in the woods than prickly, hard-leaved holly bushes.

The rain is falling very straight and sounds like a rush of steam. The ground has just begun to recover from the three feet of snow that melted into it a little while past, and Wedman and I have been talking of putting in peas, but evidently that must not be yet.

It is raining so hard that if I go indoors through it, I shall be quite drenched; besides there is no reason for me to do so, I am quite content where I am.

The sky is very grey and dark; only in the west there is a break of light which is slowly becoming orange. I try to think of what I shall do when the rain ceases. It certainly will cease soon, the sound it makes on the bare branches tells me so. I shall most likely play over some songs. There is the "Schneeglöckchen" of Schumann, with the accompaniment that is like water dropping into a pool. I discovered it the other day. It is one of the most beautiful little things that I know, nothing could be more like Spring. And yet when I think of playing it over somehow the thought makes me full of fear. It is not only that song but every one that I know—the Yensen, the Rubinstein, the Widor, the Schubert. There is a dread in my mind that I shall be bored with them or disappointed. I deliberately turn away from the idea of even the "Schneeglöckchen." It occurs to me that first of all I shall have tea—by the wood fire, out of thin Japanese cups and with my collie eagerly looking out for every crumb of cake that may fall on to the thick Persian rug. But that picture does not please me either—something may happen. The woodfire may be too hot, the Japanese cup may get broken and the collie's restlessness may annoy me. I cannot feel certain that it will all be perfect.

To-morrow I shall have to do some more gardening, but neither is that an occupation to build a castle in the air about, and indeed, when it comes to that, what is?

I have never been able to build a castle in the air. I cannot; and I envy very much the people who can. It must help life on so pleasantly.

I prefer to think of things that *have* happened, and even they make me sad no matter whether they were pleasant or unpleasant.

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If they made me happy I long for them to come again, and if they made me unhappy, looking back on them, they seem to show me very clearly what life is—as though they were intended to be symbolic. We gain things and enjoy them a little. We drift on to something else and we regret what we have left. We lose delights that we have treasured sometimes not sufficiently, and our enduring pain tells us that we were foolish to have expected them to continue.

There is very little in life that brings supreme happiness, and I know now as I lie here that I have made a mistake in always hoping that this supremacy would come.

I no longer look forward to the future because it fills me with dread and the past makes me sad and depressed for I am not a philosopher.

I wonder if that would be called morbidity. I can hear the word flung at me and others too, but I am ready to combat them. "Inertia" is one that rings in my ears, and: "Nothing would be done if we were all like you." I have to smile to myself, and involuntarily I think: "Do you do so much then with your improvements, your societies, your Progress?"

The rain has ceased as suddenly as it began. There is no wind, but a scent of warm wet earth pervading the world. The orange rift in the west has grown a little wider and the sun is touching it. There is a drop of rain hanging from every twig as though it were there waiting intentionally for the sun to give it its moment of splendour before it falls to the ground.

A blackbird that is building a nest in the faggot stack comes a little way out of its bush and sings.

First come one or two notes, then a phrase and after the phrase a pause—then another phrase. In the woods below he is answered, but he is very confident, very proud, very sure of his own excellence, and not only that but of the perfection of the moment. He seems to say with his sweet assurance: "Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy! This is good, this is sweet, this is life."

His notes drive the haunting accusations from my mind. I gather some of his confidence and I agree with him. Enjoyment comes only with the moment, it does not exist in the past or the future.

I rouse myself and as I go indoors I feel as if I would like to drink the soft air to a state of intoxication. The blackbird is still singing, and first steeling myself not to think of it, I sit down to play the little "Schneeglöckchen." It is as perfect as the blackbird's song and the drops of water hanging from the trees—for is it not here with me very intimate and very present?

Lucy Evans

By Gilbert Cannan

III

AFTER dinner Mr. Evans sat by the kitchen fire smoking his pipe, a fat brown clay carved into the form of a negro's head, in which he smoked negro-head tobacco. He explained the joke to Mr. Conti as he declined the cigarette which the Italian offered to make for him, and blew out his cheeks in scorn when no smile came even at the third explanation. He laughed heartily himself—Mr. Conti was too somnolent with the great dinner he had eaten. He stretched himself on the settle, and blowing thin jets of blue smoke fell to pondering the strange question of heredity as exemplified here in Lucy's father and mother and herself. He was puzzled to know why, with such cloddish parents, there should be that in Lucy to arouse keen interest in himself, the admirable Giuseppe Conti. He took Mr. Evans in detail, when conversation had waned and died. He sat there hunched in a high-backed oaken chair; a great head with unkempt hair, grey, and grey-patched mustard-coloured beard; under the thatch of hair on either side huge ears, long-lobed, the lobes thrust out by the fat of the jaws; eyes large and heavy, but the eyelids puckered and screwed by gazing in keen weather; great neck, with a deep crease at the base of the skull; body vast, so vast that it seemed to overflow the oaken chair: a slow man, a slow mover and a slow thinker, but solid. Over his head from a hook in the blackened oak beam hung a huge ham. That seemed such a fitting symbol of his host (at fifteen shillings a week) that, glancing up at it, the Italian smiled. The old man's pipe went out; he jabbed at it with his great thumb, sucked at it until it creaked and babbled in protest, abandoned it, thrust it into the pocket of his corduroys, and, after cocking a heavy eye at the paying guest, a questioning eye as though he had forgotten about the queer little thing and wondered what it was doing there, he went to sleep, dropped his jaw and snored. His dreams seemed to be concerned with flies, for, while he slept, his right hand kept flicking, brushing, crushing between finger and thumb,

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crushing with such force and yet with such ease that the Italian, watching fascinated and, understanding the motions, was sickened with fear and fell to a study of his own thin hands and tapering fingers, cigarette stained. The old man's hand flicked, brushed and crushed—the Italian's imagination ran riot: he could bear it no longer and to stop its slow movements he thrust into the hand the first thing that came to him—a box of wooden matches. The old man snored, and the hand with slow certain force closed round the box—it was full—and crushed it into splinters and chips: matches slid down on to the floor and into the creases of his corduroys. The hand stopped working and stayed full of matches that stuck out at odd angles. Mr. Conti ran out into the sun and stood against the nearest pigsty, watching the swine spattering about the thick ooze nosing up cabbage stalks.

In the barn near by he heard the clanking of a machine. He picked his way across the muck of the yard and climbed into the barn, where he found Lucy and Ella chopping hay for the horses. Lucy nodded brightly at him. He stood watching the knives cut clean through the hay as it was thrust through the aperture. It reminded him of a barber holding a man's hair between two fingers and snipping it with scissors. Lucy was feeding the machine, Ella turning the handle. She was hot and perspiring and with the back of her hand had wiped at her face, so that her complexion was smeared. Her eyes shone as he had not seen them shine before. He threw himself on a pile of straw and lay smoking.

"You mustn't smoke in here." This from Lucy.

He put out his cigarette on the sole of his boot and began to whistle.

"Come and take a hand," said Lucy.

"I am al-ouays turning handles—a churn, a machine to separate cream and milk, a chopper of roots, a breaker of cows' cakes—Dere is nothing else."

"Tired, Ella?"

Ella grunted. She was tired and wished she could loosen her corsets. She had not bargained for this, but had been swept away by the demon of energy that had seized Lucy. She had been on the point of revolt when Conti had entered the barn. With an audience she would give in nothing to Lucy. Insects out of the hay had bitten her ankles through her openwork stockings—Lucy had reverted to her worsted—and though she was in torture she would not confess to it, or to her desire to escape and lie picturesquely under a tree in the orchard—with Dick—who had peered into the barn at intervals and shouted a

LUCY EVANS

roaring greeting. She went on turning. Presently Lucy suggested a change and Ella fed the machine while Lucy turned the handle.

Lucy turned to Conti and smiled at him over an armful of hay.

"Them as don't work, must sing."

"Sing?"

"Don't they 'ave apple-songs in Italy?"

"Grape songs, songs of the vine—all songs. They sing always my people."

"Sing then."

Mr. Conti smiled and his lip went right up under his nose. He began to hum, then to croon. He caught a note, held it, softly, swelling, shook it, leaped from it up the scale. His voice soared—as yet there was no tune—one note—soaring. Lucy stopped still, her under-lip trembled and a troubled look came into her eyes. She looked at him and her eyes met his, full, square, for the first time since they had met. While he held the note he held her eyes. The note died; she turned away with a little shiver. The Italian wriggled in his bed of straw and broke into song, a master song, a song of vines and sun, of cypress trees and water, running water, and a snake and an emerald lizard basking. Then a song of triumphant love, and a song of love ashamed and unhappy: a song of death——

"That's pretty," said Ella.

The work was done. Lucy filled two great tin buckets with the chopped hay and without a word left the barn, bearing the buckets hung from a yoke. Mr. Conti chuckled and broke into a yodel. He laughed: and his laugh was more than ever like the rustling of dry leaves. He made a place for Ella by his side on the straw. She sat down and began playing with his hair.

"You've got quite a nice voice," said she.

"O—oh. Yes—You like—a—music?"

"I love it."

"You? She loves it: the little Lucia. Did you see it, how she did tremble, how she did look unhappy, how all from her little ankles to her neck she swayed, and swung to it. Did you see it, you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Oh! you did not. How could you, you?—Eh! How could you? Eh! The little Lucia—Pretty. . . ."

"She's queer," said Ella, and she told Mr. Conti how at the music hall she had made an exhibition of herself by singing aloud when the band played, and swung her arms and beat time with

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her hands. Ella laughed at the memory of that evening. She curled up near the recumbent Mr. Conti so that her knee rested on his hip.

"Lucy's a little fool," she said. "She might 'ave—have—no end of a good time, but she simply don't know—nothing—Green! My word, you should ha' seen her by the sea with them chaps in the motor-car. They get that angry—they do. She was sort of crazy by the sea, she was. She don't mind kissin,' but she kisses a man as if he was a baby, and when they give her things she just takes 'em—she does. She never seems to think they want anythink in return. By gum! if I 'ad 'er looks, I'd go to London I would—D'you live in London?"

"I—Oh!—no-o—I am the music in the theatre in your town. But I was ill, and they said I should die, unless I come into country and good air. It was in here—hollow like a box. I should be big singer, if it was not—hollow—hollow—like a box. Tap it—you see—Hollow! Listen! Put your ear, so close, like that——"

He dragged Ella's head down and made her place her ear against his chest. He breathed hard and she heard the breath go rattling up from his lungs.

"Oh!" she said.

"I 'ave no money. I must go back to blow into my flute until I die. But I shall live first. Oh! Aie, I shall live—Damitall—a—a—a—a—a."

He spluttered and stammered.

"Only to sing like that; and I am tired; a little singing with half voice, quarter voice—not all. That was not all—not all—not all—not all. . . ."

His head fell back against Ella's. He had half risen in his excitement and he slept. His mouth was open and his breathing rattled. Ella had once seen a woman die; she was terrified. She reached out to touch his hand, it was cold; his head, that was warm enough, hot, and there was fierce beating in his temples. She brushed back his hair, and noticed a long scar in the middle of his forehead. She found a sort of pleasure in touching the hot head with her hand, and kept it there. She forgot for the moment that he was a man. She put her right arm under his neck and held his head against her bosom to keep it out of the straw, with a vague idea that straw was both uncomfortable and hot. She was sorry for him and brushed his forehead lightly with her lips.

Lucy found her so when she returned with the empty buckets. At first she was disposed to look the other way and go about her

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business of fetching more hay. She took the yoke from her shoulders, laid down the buckets and it beside them. Just then a paroxysm seized the Italian, and Ella feeling the shaking of his frame gave a little frightened "O-o-o-oh!"

Lucy turned quickly, ran across and stood looking down at them. Ella explained. Quick to act, Lucy ran to the door and called Dick from the shippin. Dick came running to join them. He stood and scratched his head. In Ella's arms Mr. Conti slept serenely. Lucy decided that he must be taken back to the house and put to bed, the doctor called. She ran across to the house to prepare her mother while Dick came across with "that there Aytalyun" in his arms. Dick did not like Mr. Conti, but was anxious and eager to help as he would have been if one of the horses had been sick. (Dick was Mr. Evans' stableman, though he did every other sort of work as well.) Mrs. Evans was at first inclined to pooh-pooh Lucy's highly coloured account of the sickness, knowing something of her daughter's temper, but, having also noticed her guest's periodic discomforts and heard him coughing at nights, she bustled about and was prepared to administer poultice, or simples and old wives' remedies. Mr. Conti recovered in transit. Whether it was the strong odour of cow that hung about Dick, or that in his heavy slumber he had heard remotely Lucy's threats of mothering and cossetting, or that it was merely the fresh air blowing, it is impossible to know. When they got him to the house and into the living room, he slipped out of Dick's arms on to his feet, and brushing back his hair, looked for a moment wildly, vacantly. Then in a weak voice he declared that he would lie down on the sofa, if he might have some tea. Mrs. Evans turned on her heel and swept away into the kitchen. Presently the oven door was slammed to viciously and the old lady's voice was heard sepulchrally. What she said sounded like "Fudge!"

Fudge or not, Mr. Conti was certainly in an abnormal condition, and as certainly believed in his indisposition. He was very sorry for himself and turned pathetic eyes upon Ella and Lucy. He complained of a dryness in his mouth. Lucy ran off to make him some tea.

In the kitchen she found her mother, still muttering—"Shamming," she said, and Lucy said, "Oh! Mother."

"Shamming he is—I said 'e was up to no good as soon as I set eyes on him. Your fehther 'd promised Vicar to 'ave 'im—'E come through a charity. Shamming! Tea! Gollop! Are ye both goin' to sit a-gogglin' at 'im. You an' that mop-at-the-fair friend o' yours—one of you's got to work."

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Lucy let her mother talk, made a pot of strong tea, cut some bread and butter, her mother's own bread and especial pride, and returned with them to the invalid. He was sitting propped up with horse-hair cushions on the sofa, smoking. He was alone, and explained that Ella had gone off with Dick to be shown where to find eggs. He did not add that his own diplomacy was responsible for the desertion. His eyes were more than ever pathetic.

There was no small table in the room. Lucy drew up a chair by the sofa and sat with the tray on her knees. She poured out tea and handed the cup to him. He took it with a queer little bob of the head. He declined to eat at first, but on being pressed and told that it was cut thin "like afternoon tea" especially to tempt the appetite he gave way and took and nibbled at a slice. He did not stop smoking to eat. She was overcome with shyness, remembering the effect that Mr. Conti had made upon her in the barn. The man knew this and lay back contented and pleased with himself eyeing her. Once she looked up and caught his eye, turned quickly, blushed and hung her head. In reaching for another slice of bread and butter he contrived to brush her knee with his hand. She trembled and almost upset the tray. He threw out his hand to catch it. In doing so his hand accidentally met hers. He held it.

"Don't," she said, and drew away.

"You do not like—a—me?"

"I dunno. I think I'm afeared on you."

"You like—a—music—my music?"

For answer she made only a little moan and sat gazing out of the window into the garden where a tall poplar swayed in the wind and the asters nodded.

"Shall I make music for you, by the sea—to-night? My flute or my voice—and the sea creeping up to the sands—little waves like snow. Creeping—white fingers—catching at the earth—Eh? To hold it—and love it—Hein? Shall I? While they sleep all the—the fools that do not know."

He crooned on of the sea, and sea pools of shells and mirrors for the moon, of lapping waves and shrill bird's call, and silver moon-roads on the sea, of silver fish, and water caressing, kissing. . . Lucy turned to him wide-eyed: she understood his words not at all, but his voice, the catch and the croon in his voice, caught and held her, as he said the sea caught and held the earth.

"You will—come," he said.

She stared at him. His eyes bulged, almost squinted and he breathed hard through his nose.

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“ You—will—come.”

Lucy's face grew drawn and haggard, the skin stretched tight over her bones ; her lips were dry. She tried to moisten them with her tongue, but that was dry and would not reach her lips. She tried to speak. She shook her shoulders, staring at him, swayed rapidly to and fro from shoulders up, staring at him, shivered, shuddered, then, staring at him, into his eyes, nodded, jerked her head back, and again, nodded. Tears came. She rose, laid the tray on the table and ran out by the window.

Mr. Conti smiled. He lay with his head thrown back. He was really exhausted.

Through the garden Lucy ran blindly, dodging instinctively to the left through the little wood and out by the corner gate, which no one ever used, to avoid a chance meeting. Tears flowed freely, her eyes felt hot, the tears hot in them and emotion choked her. The strings of her mob-cap came loose and floated across her mouth. She tore it from her head, forgetting the hat pin in it. The bonnet dropped into a lilac bush by the gate. The gate was stiff, had not been opened for long. She tugged at it, set her teeth and tugged at it, gave a furious “ O-o-o-oh ! ” of rage and pushed at it, stamped her foot. Struggling with it, she eventually coaxed it open, swept through like a wind, and in the open meadow threw out her arms, her head back and so raced down to a place she knew by the river. Her hair came loose and streamed in the wind she made in her course.

In the hollow in the long grass where tall weeds dipped to a green pool in the sedge she threw herself down and let her hair hang to the water's face, mirrored in it, and her face pale in the dusky cloud. Two strands of hair she took and tied across her mouth, that she might not see her lips mirrored in the pool. From the reeds a moor-hen rose, startled, and flew low over the water. Swallows darted, skimmed the water ; she watched them—a beat of the wings, one beat, and they sped, hurrying little flights, dropping, then up, whirling, round and away out of sight,—blue, with flashes of white and yellow—red. On a willow on the other side of the stream she watched a tree-creeper hopping up, clutching the bark—and up, until she lost him in the leaves. She watched the reeds sway and rustle, whisper, swaying to the slow march of the stream. In the shallows the water murmured over pebbles, singing dainty songs. Lucy cried aloud and plunged her arms into the pool, the cool green pool—silver rings of water round her arms, silver bracelets. Slow bubbles rose to the surface. She tried to catch them to hold them, in her hands. . . . There was a moonstone at home that her brother had sent from

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India. The bubbles were like moonstones—pretty. . . . A heron squawked—ominously. Dread rose in her, a cold heaviness. She turned from her water, and lay face downwards in the long grass, her cool wet arms against her eyes, and sobbed—bitterly. . . .

Weary, she turned and lay gazing up into the sky, her hands under her head, her fingers twisted in her hair. At first she lay without thought, given up to weariness and a soft ache in all her limbs. Over her head grew tall weeds. A beetle came booming through the air, and in his hurling flight dashed himself against a stalk. He fell, and the important boom of him ceased so suddenly that Lucy laughed, and sorrow left her. She rose to her knees and smelt the weeds, with her arms crushed them against her face, crushed juices from them. She rose and ran from the place where she had lain, in revulsion from it; the bruised grass. . . . She wandered by the stream and sang little catches of song, an old song that her mother used to sing for lullaby.

“I have three brothers over the sea ;
Peri—meri—dixi—darmanee.
They each sent a present unto me ;
Petrum—partrum, Paradiso temporare,
Peri—meri—dixi—darmanee.”

More than that one verse she did not know. She sang it again and again, until the windings of the stream brought her to the mill by the mound where the stream dips into sand and drifts in many channels to the sea. By the mill she sang :

“Oh ! feyther, oh ! feyther here swims a swan
Wi’ a hey down, bow down,
Oh ! feyther, oh ! feyther here swims a swan
Be main like a drowned gentlewoman,
An’ I’ll be true to my love
If my love’ll be true to me.”

She climbed to the summit of the mound, to its crest of thin, tall pines, blown, and gaunt. By the slenderest pine she stood, embracing it with her arms, and laid her cheek against its rough bark to look up into its swaying tuft. The wind blew fresh up from the sea across the grey marshes and caught her hair, and her light skirt was blown about the tree clinging to it. Sea-mews cried, gulls circled, and behind, the arms of the mill twirled, creaking and groaning. Clouds chased, and presently the sun shone full, low down over the sea. Lucy screened her eyes and watched a great ship sail out into the sun. Soon it was gone. Its column of smoke hung over the line of the sea, but soon that

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also was gone. Lucy felt herself alone. Her hold of the pine loosened, and she leaned against it with her face to the sun, her eyes closed. . . .

Up the mound, nose to the ground, tracing her footsteps, Rover came racing. He jumped about her, licked her hand, and because she gave him no greeting, tugged at her skirts. She laughed, clouted his head and dropped to her knees.

“Who’s dead, Rover?”

Rover lay stiff. She laid her head on his and crooned to him: old tales of enchantment, wise women, and brave days in the Wirral when the little people held Parliament in the marshes of nights and forgot to take away their little green cushions of moss. It was an old game, and the sign of its end was that she should thrust her finger into the dog’s mouth. This she did, and in a flash Rover was up and off, she after him. Running by the straight path between mill and river across the home meadow, they now reached the farm, to find tea over and the house empty. From the dairy Lucy heard the screech of the separator and through it Ella’s falsely boisterous laugh.

She was glad that none had seen her return. She made herself fresh tea and fed Rover with bread and butter—dry bread he scorned.

IV

She heard Dick’s voice and her father’s—“Hi! then, Hey! there—Bess—Blackberry—Oosht—Oosht.” Rover rushed barking out of the house to aid in driving the kine. Lucy followed. With caressing voices Dick and his master urged the cows on; soft-eyed Jerseys, small, thin, delicate; eight of them, with heavy hanging udders. They ambled towards the gate but stopped, for Dewberry, the bell-cow, was alarmed by the dog, and stood stock still shaking her head up and down so that her bell jangled.

“Down Rover—Rover boy. Down ye—Down.”

Lucy struck him with her flat hand. He lay still with his tongue hanging, the corners of his mouth curled up, the whites of his eyes showing in a leer.

Lucy opened the gate. Dewberry stopped for a moment, looking up with head lowered at the flapping pink of Lucy’s skirt, then plunged forward and made for the shippon. The others followed in a heap. With pushing, herding, swearing, they were got into the stalls, the chains put over their necks, their mangers filled, and the milking began, Lucy, Dick, and her father and a clownish boy who appeared from the dark recesses

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rubbing his eyes, with straw in his hair, each taking a pail. Lucy took Dewberry and sat by the door. There was a clanking of pails, the thud of the cows' hoofs on the brick pavement, the sloppy crunch, crunch, as they nosed in the hay and oats in the mangers, cries of "steady," then the zip, zip, zip of the jets of milk ringing into the pails. Dewberry was restive at first under Lucy's unpractised hand and made great efforts to put her foot into the milk pail. Lucy dodged, but had her arm bruised. To avoid trouble she got close into the cow, pressing her face deep into its side, and held the pail between her knees right under the full udder. The cow grew steadier, and contented herself with swishing her tail across Lucy's neck at intervals, and as her load of milk grew lighter she became more contented—ceased to stamp. A shadow fell and Lucy knew that Giuseppe Conti was standing in the doorway surveying the milking. She felt no particular interest in his presence there but was acutely conscious of it. She did not turn her head, but she saw him, knew exactly how he was standing, that he was smoking, the exact angle of his head, the darting of his little eyes, and the smile with his lip right up under his nose. The milking over she hung the pail on the scale, the stool on the wall and, adjusting weights, found that Dewberry had nearly touched the five pounds. She cried the weight to her father who boomed approval from the darkness through teeth clenched over a pipe. She poured the milk into the great dairy pail and walked with it past the Italian. She did not look at him, and he made no offer to assist her. As she turned the corner she felt him move to watch her retreating figure and heard him cluck down in his throat. She drew a quick breath and broke almost into a run so that the milk rocked in the pail, slopped over and some fell upon the mud to mingle with it in an instant. Fearful of waste she trod warily until she reached the dairy where she found her mother passing the milk through a sieve before pouring it into the separator, the handle of which Ella, hot and blowsy, with the marvellous erection of hair sadly disordered, was turning and turning, every now and then stopping to scratch her ankles which were itching and swollen from the bites of insects in the hay. Lucy was for leaving them and returning to the milking, but her mother made her take Ella's place in order that Ella might seek relief in the application of salad oil or cream—cream best. Ella disappeared. Lucy and her mother were kept busy, for the men brought pails and pails of milk that had to be passed through the cooler. Through the window as she stood and turned Lucy could see across the yard to the shippon. By the door leaning against the

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lintel stood Mr. Conti smoking—idle, scoffing, indolent, mischievous. Dick was coming through the door with a full pail. She saw the Italian put out his foot and trip him up. Dick pitched forward, jerked, spun round, stretched himself and caught Mr. Conti's head a swinging back-hander. Livid, the Italian's shoulders went up, and he spat like a cat. The next moment the two men were locked together; a cat and a retriever. Dick shook himself free and the Italian went flying through the air over a low fence on to a new dung-heap, face down. Lucy cried out and Mr. Evans and the boy came running. Dick looked sheepish, the boy flung his head back and guffawed. He was clouted for his pains. Mrs. Evans paid no attention to the noise—she had seen nothing of the scene—and went on working. Lucy turned mechanically, staring, without interest, as though it were some scene in a booth that she was watching, some clumsy scene that failed to touch her. She saw her father take a handful of straw, make a long arm, seize the little foreigner and clean him down. She saw Mr. Conti, trembling with rage, grinning hideously with eyes narrowed to slits, kick at her father's shins, and her father shake him until his teeth chattered together and sense returned. She saw Dick tugging at his forelock and the boy steal away to laugh, and she saw Dick made to apologise and without knowing it she called out "He tripped him up, he did," as she would have called out a warning to the heroine in a drama, but no one heard her. She saw Dick and Mr. Conti shake hands and the resumption of work as though nothing had happened, and the Italian crawl to the house, hang-dog and crest-fallen. He was seen no more that day, did not appear at the evening meal though bells were rung and Dick went shouting about the farm.

Before supper Lucy had a long conversation with her mother; if it could be called a conversation, for Mrs. Evans was almost entirely monosyllabic, her daughter for the most part silent, sitting with her hands in her lap and her head down. However curious her methods, Mrs. Evans was certainly effective, for in a very short time she had extracted sufficient information concerning Ella to confirm her first impressions, and was mockingly cordial to that young woman ever subsequently, treatment that was harder to bear for Lucy than her first frigid hospitality. Ella was fortunately pachydermatous and in nowise susceptible to fine shades. Further, without much from Lucy, Mrs. Evans had arrived at a tolerably accurate picture of the household in which her daughter served. Of the baby Lucy could talk and told her mother how she had nursed it during its sickness. Her face so

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lit up that Mrs. Evans stopped in her work at the kitchen table, laid down the knife with which she was peeling potatoes and leaned forward on her hands.

“ You’ll be married soon, likely, my dear ? ”

Lucy coloured and shook her head.

“ Will Dick not content ye. ’E’s yer cousin,¹ and a fine leg to ’im ?—Say summut ; ye jowk. Dick’d wed ye at a word, one wag o’ yer finger. . . . Ye sit there yatherin’ o’ the babby. No babby’s any good to a woman, ’less it’s her own.”

Lucy sniffed.

“ Is there any young body a courtin’ ye ? Ye’re not walkin’ out ? Town’s no place for you, my dear. You’d best stay here. I’ll not quarrel if you won’t—an’—an’ ye shan’t go into t’ fact’ry. Stay here, m’ dear, an’ Dick’ll wed ye.”

Tears blinded the girl. She looked mournfully up at her mother and shook her head, then rose and left the room, went upstairs to her attic and knelt by her little white bed in an attitude of prayer, though there was no thought of praying in her.

Her father coming into the kitchen just after she had left it, sat heavily under a torrent of words from his wife, abuse of Ella, Mr. Conti, Dick for not marrying Lucy, Lucy for not marrying Dick, and himself for giving her such a strange boggarty girl for daughter. On the subject of Ella the old woman became coarse. Mr. Evans clicked with his tongue against his teeth as to an unruly mare, lit his pipe and said nothing.

After supper old friends came in to see Lucy and to be presented to her fine friend from town. By way of impressing the country folk Ella had donned a blouse cut low in the neck and short in the sleeves. Though the effect was by no means pleasing, for her skin was in texture coarse and her arms and wrists were ugly, she succeeded in her intention, for the village maidens and factory girls were impressed to shyness, and Ella thoroughly enjoyed herself playing the fine lady, talking mincingly and giggling shrilly at the rough sallies of Dick and Mr. Evans. With the Italian absent Lucy was perfectly happy, gay and proud in presenting her fine friend. She whispered darkly to her friends of the frilly things that underlay Ella’s glittering exterior. Dick overheard and interposed with a question of pretended ignorance, for which he was slapped by a tittering wench in an enormous hat of feathers. Some one talked of the mummers in the village. Saturday night and mummers ! Even Mr. Evans was kindled to interest and insisted upon a visit of the whole party at his expense. His wife stood out, but was eventually coaxed into consent and in great good humour donned her shawl and

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bonnet. The old people led the way, and Dick with two girls on one arm and three on the other stepped bravely behind them. Down the road they went, the old man with a lantern. A spirit of lightness seized them all and the lantern swung ahead of the young people. Solemn at first, some one laughed and let loose a flood of chatter, talk of weddings and children, walkings out and sweetheartings. The little girl holding Ella's arm ran her finger over the soft silk of Ella's blouse, and began to murmur a hymn-tune, then to hum it. It was taken up by the rest, each voice unerringly taking its part, Dick tenor, Mr. Evans bass. Ella tried to join in, but grew bewildered and gave it up. They marched on.

"Brother clasps the y'and of bro-o-ther
Onward goes the pil-grim band. . . ."

Dick's voice rose above the rest unfalteringly true; passing under a hill it evoked an echo which repeated in a ridiculous voice the last words of each line. Ella tittered and broke the fervour of the singers. One by one they drew to a close and the singing died until Dick found himself singing alone; then he too ceased until they reached the village. Passing the public-house that stood on the high road they were greeted vociferously by loafing youths, and Dick came in for much chaff. "Cannot ye spare a wench or two, Dick Tenton?" "A gradely lad Dick Tenton, sithee 'ow they cling to un." "That's t' Town lass." "See 'er stockin's."

Dick ran the gauntlet rather well, though he was crimson with shame. They turned up a lane a few yards on from the public-house and came to the meadow where the mummers had pitched their booth, a rough wooden affair with a canvas roof tied together with ropes, looking as precarious as a house of cards. The programme of the evening appeared to be popular, for there was a throng outside the door which was held open by a demijohn placed on the grass. The party from the farm were warmly greeted and surprise was expressed that Mrs. Evans should have come to the village on an errand so frivolous. She was in high feather: the walk with her husband, on her husband's arm, had touched the spark of romance in her, taken her back to old days, softened her. She cracked a joke or two to the amazement of all her audience. Lucy was warmly greeted, and Ella aroused as much interest as her devouring vanity could demand.

"Not brought the Aytalyan gentleman?" some one asked.

"No," said Mr. Evans, and Dick told the story of the dung-heap without too much picturesque exaggeration. There was

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great delight. The huge tattered woman who kept the door grew anxious, for they were blocking the door.

"Step in please, step in please. Performance just about to begin. Seats, shillin'! sixpence, an' threepence; children 'arf price—twopence if ye stand."

Mr. Evans paid for front seats and they filed into the second row to find themselves just behind the gentry from the great house. The ladies were in evening dress and it was remarked with audible comment, when Ella removed her shawl, that she, too, had a blouse that showed her neck and arms.

The place was lit dimly with oil lamps, two on each wall, and the benches were arranged tier on tier, so that for threepence as good a view of the stage could be got as for a shilling except that there was a tent-pole which supported the canvas roof and obscured the vision of those behind it by cutting the stage in half. The village people crowded in and filled the booth to suffocation. With great solemnity the tattered woman produced a dirty card on which in large letters was printed the legend, *House Full*. This she hung on the door and stood in the narrow aperture filling it, driving away further applicants with heavy badinage. When all were driven away she turned in to the audience, held up a disc of iron by a ring and beat it solemnly for some seconds as an intimation that the performance was about to begin. There were no programmes. Three knocks drew attention to the stage: a hairy red arm was thrust in front of the curtain with another dirty placard on which was printed, *Joan of Arc. Tragedy*. Cheers greeted this announcement, ironical from the gentry, of pleased anticipation from the simple.

Then more knocks and the curtain rose jerkily and the tragedy began.

It was a casual business, but the players were sincere, and were successful in holding their real audience, the peasants, whose engrossed interest and occasional protest soon succeeded in drowning the sniggers and running fire of comment of the people from the great house.

Tatterdemalions, drunkards, vagabonds they might be in their caravans or on the road, but on the stage behind the row of oil lamps that served for footlights they were veritable kings and queens, solemn, and with such dignity as not even the ridiculous words they improvised or fished out from their store of stock-phrases to fit the situations could destroy.

Lucy was enthralled, clapped and cheered with the rest; cheered the hero, the young knight, and hissed the villain, cried when Joan blessed the comic soldier who the instant before had

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betrayed her; thrilled at the clash of arms and the pageantry of three soldiers.

Half-way through the performance the gentry having passed the stage of amusement filed out, and the tattered woman admitted a file of late-comers who crept along with their heads down not to obscure the view. Among them Lucy saw at once the Italian. Her attention was diverted from the tragedy; she tried to grasp the thread again, but was vague, distraught and unhappy. He sat in front of her a little to the right, and she could not keep from observing him, how his ears grew out of his head, like bats' ears, thin almost like paper and a little pointed at the tips, and how queer his head was, a sloping forehead with such odd bumps over the eyes, and his hair so thick and shining, and his neck so short. He had changed his clothes, and was shaved. He seemed to follow the tragedy with interest and shouted and applauded with the best of them. The tragedy ended with Joan rescued from the burning and given in wedlock to the young knight who had conquered France for England. A small Union Jack was waved and the performers, ranged in line, sung "Rule Britannia," in which the audience joined though only a few could recollect the words. There was great enthusiasm, and the actors one by one bowed to the applause.

The curtain fell, and there was much striking of matches and lighting of pipes.

The Italian turned and entered into conversation with Ella. He ignored Lucy. He noticed that Dick had taken advantage of the semi-darkness to take Ella's hand, and smiled wickedly. He turned suddenly and looked full at Lucy but without any sort of recognition of her. Uneasiness grew in her and she turned away, and made conversation as best she could with friends who came to talk to her, or leaned over from their places. She was troubled, by what she knew not, and was glad when the signal was given and the curtain rose again, and the audience settled once more to attention.

After a comic song, Mrs. Evans firmly announced her intention of going home.

Mr. Evans recognised the futility of argument and the party left the theatre just as the funny man had begun to sing to the accompaniment of an old tinkling piano behind the scenes. Lucy was not sorry to go. Her head had begun to ache. As she passed him the Italian half rose from his seat, bowed and said:

"Good-night, Miss Lucy."

She gave a little cry, hardly a cry, more a gasp, breathed

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"good-night" and left. Her friends kissed her, were met by their swains and vanished up the village. During the walk home Dick walked in front with Ella. Lucy clung to her father's arm. She felt a security in the contact. His arm was so strong. He was in jocular mood and teased her about Ella's conquest of Dick. Mrs. Evans reproved his levity, and asked further questions concerning Ella's history. At Lucy's professed ignorance, she ejaculated only "Humph."

Dick and Ella had disappeared ahead. When Lucy and her father and mother arrived at the farm they had not arrived.

Mrs. Evans thought they should be locked out, and announced her intention of going to bed at once. Mr. Evans said he would sit up a little if Lucy would stay with him and brew his toddy. He produced his pipe and sat in the oaken chair by the fire. Lucy put the kettle on. Her mother lit her candle, kissed Lucy and went upstairs. They could hear her padding about in the room above the kitchen, the bed creaked as she climbed into it.

The kettle boiled soon and Lucy brewed the toddy stiff, with a slice of lemon and two lumps of sugar. Mr. Evans sipped it and smacked his lips.

"Is ought t' matter wi' ye, lass?"

"No, feyther. I'm tired."

"Not frettin' for Dick?"

"The idea, feyther."

The thought of Dick suggested the encounter with the Italian. The huge old man began to chuckle and laugh inside him. He shook: his vast body heaved, his neck swelled and his face grew purple. His appearance was alarming, but Lucy, familiar with the symptoms of his mirth, waited for the attack to subside. The convulsions and heavings lasted long, but at length there came an eruption of laughter. He slapped his thigh and shouted:

"Wiped un down wi' straw, I did—t' muck off 'im. Varmint, that little creepin' thing. Like a stoat—I'd screw 'is neck I would, or shoot 'im." His eyes turned up to the gun over the mantelpiece, "Shoot 'im I would, soon as look; same as I'd shoot Rover if 'e took to sheep worryin'—'cept that 'e pays fifteen shilling a week f'r 'is board."

"But he's going soon."

"Day after to-morrow."

He finished his toddy and pipe and rose.

"I'll lock oop, 'cept t' kitchen door. Go to bed, lass. I think ye look weary, but you're that boggarty, as yer moother says."

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He lit her candle for her. She put up her face, he stooped from his great height and kissed her. She turned to the door. She heard him :—

“Glad ye’re coom, lass—mak’ it oop wi’ yer moother. She’s nowt else.”

He seemed to be talking almost more to himself than to her. She said nothing. As she went she heard him wandering about the house to bolt the different doors, and muttering, booming to himself. Then he, too, ascended the stairs, that creaked and groaned under his weight. She heard him roll heavily into bed, and the clatter of his candlestick as he knocked it from the bedside table in drawing the bedclothes over himself.

Then all was silent save for the noises from the farmyard, and the cropping of a cow that was privileged to spend the night out of doors in the home-meadow.

In the long attic Lucy sat first on her bed. She put out the candle. The pale faint light of the waning moon streamed in through the little square window in the roof. On Ella’s bed lay various articles of clothing. Lucy could distinguish a hat and a pair of stockings. Other shapeless things lay strewn there. Even yet Lucy was unable to detach Ella from the glamour with which she had invested her in early days. Probably she had no sort of affection for her, and she was certainly uneasy at the thought of Dick and Ella together, in any sort of intimacy. There were none of the princely qualities in Dick. He was just strong and big, and he was always there to hand. It had been so always. Mr. Swears might sort well with Ella, or even the——. Thought snapped. Lucy was forcing herself not to think of the Italian.

Under the window on the gravel she heard footsteps. She ran to peep. She saw Dick and Ella peer in at the kitchen window, test it to find it open, then wander off again to be lost in the shrubbery, passing in the direction of the orchard. Lucy called.

“Dick—Dick—dear Dick.”

There was nothing in answer. Far down the road a yokel coming from the mummers was singing in drunken glee. What he was singing she could not hear.

An owl hooted in the woods ; the night had begun.

Clouds blew up from the sea, and the moon raced. Bats flew mysteriously, and moths attracted by the moon shining on the panes beat against the glass.

Something alarmed Rover. He began to bark and to tug furiously at his chain. The dogs on the other side of the barn took up the outcry.

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A fox stole through the shrubbery dropping white flecks, the feathers of a wretched bird taken from its roost.

The dogs ceased their outcry.

Came a faint call, one note, then another and another, silvery notes, dropping. . . . Lucy leaned from the window, rigid, heart leaping. Again the note, silvery, swelling—a catch, and a song rose, a plaint, a song of desire . . . throbbing. Lucy crooned softly. The song rose higher and higher, yet soft, soft. . . .

She turned from the window and lay with her head on her pillow, faced buried—to escape from the song. . . . The note changed. No longer human : the soft note of a pipe, of a flute, but the same air, always the same air, the plaint. Its simple rhythm beat into her brain. Towards the end there was a catch, a silence, almost a sigh. How she leaped to that.

Beside herself she moved, hands out like a sleep-walker, eyes staring, out through the door, seemed to float down the stairs, noiselessly, mysteriously ; doors opened as if by magic ; out into the garden where the night flowers glowed to greet her, and the song rose to full flood, then ebbed, flickering, calling her on and on. Past the orchard she crept, softly and swiftly. She heard voices, drew up, stopped dead, wide-eyed, face drawn, hard breathing—Dick's voice.

“ Oi do love ye, Ella deary, my dear, my very dear. So fine ye are—so fine—my dear.”

“ Oh ! Dick. Dick. Dick.” Lucy would have called to him, to save him, she knew. She loved Dick, only Dick, and Ella. Ella was terrible. She would have cried, but her lips would not frame words, her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and the flute was calling, calling, reedy notes shaken out, scattered like silver, the song, the vine now, and the sun, of running water, calling her on. She heard Dick no more, but moved swiftly, fled by the fields, following the fluting. By the stream it led her, by the place where she had lain, by the mill and the mound, out across the marshes, to the wild sands and the sea.

The fluting ceased. Rounding a sand-hill where grew speary grass, she came upon the Italian, flute to his lips, silent. He fixed eyes upon her, she upon him. He made no motion, no sound. Standing still, eyes upon him, she understood his desire, loosened her hair and removed her shoes and stockings. She dabbled her feet in a sea pool, stooped and cooled hands, arms and neck with the salt water.

The Italian sat there, gazing at her, under the moon, her hair,

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her thick hair, under the moon, and her face so pale. She threw open the bosom of her dress for him. The wind caressed her, took her hair and played with it, blew it across her face, round her neck. She stood there swaying in the wind, eyes upon the Italian, swaying with the wind and with the sea. The sea crept up towards them, long arms embracing the earth—and the moon raced.

Of a sudden the Italian began to sing, with the wind and with the sea. With the song, Lucy passed from the slow rhythm of the sea, swaying, not moving her limbs, just swaying. The song grew wild, higher, almost to a scream, and she passed into a dance, wild sweep of arms, tossing of hair, striding, up, up, up they took it to frenzy—then down to a close—Lucy pitched forward and crept towards the Italian. So she gave herself to him.

The moon raced to a black cloud and hid herself.

V

Ella evinced such a proprietary interest in Dick the next day as caused Lucy to shrink from her. It was Sunday, and the household was rigorously Sabbatarian. Mr. Conti, in revolt against the atmosphere, was seen no more that day. Lucy felt sadly alone. She could not talk with her mother, and the sense of protection that she had felt with her father during the evening walk from the village was gone. On coming down, she had kissed neither father nor mother, and until chapel time she wandered listlessly about the yard and the outhouses, caressing the cows, cooing to the pigeons, and talking to Rover. She told him many of her little adventures in the town. The dog lay with his forepaws thrust out and his head laid between them, eyes blinking up at her as she sat stroking his head and brushing the hair from his eyes. He was very sympathetic and Lucy wept softly. She was just puzzled. There had been no thunderbolt, no displeasure from mysterious depths, and there was no change except in herself, greater feeling, keener and deeper, more understanding.

Nothing had changed, sky, trees, grass, the farm, the beasts; they were just as unconcerned, as pre-occupied with their food, just as submissive to caress or blow. She could not recollect clearly events; she simply was unable to understand why she was not feeling what she ought to be feeling. Her mother had never told her anything, had never attempted to reveal. Nothing was changed. She, Lucy Evans, was Lucy Evans still, no

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change in her mother, father, nor in Dick, only Ella had become odious to her.

In the afternoon Lucy stole away.

Turning down the lane away from the farm she came upon a small girl, a child of seven in charge of two babies. The child was in tears. She knew Lucy, and tried to gulp down her sorrow. One of the babies sitting by the roadside rolled over into some nettles and set up a howl in which the other, from sympathy, joined. Lucy seized a dock and applied the cool thick leaf to the baby's arm, and presently succeeded in quieting it. She held it in her arms and rocked it to sleep, laying her handkerchief over its head to protect it from the sun. The child crept to her side and her hand stole into Lucy's fingers, crooking round fingers. Lucy was glad of that, glad of the trust reposed in her. She knew the child, and was surprised to find her so far afield, almost three miles from the cottage where she lived. She questioned.

The child pointed down the road to an old soap-box mounted on the wheels of an old perambulator—overturned, and one wheel gone.

"I was a-takin' 'em oop t' rood—me-y-ant's ill—and she coom t' moother an' moother couldn't say 'naw.' Feyther, 'e went aht and 'even't coom back."

Lucy knew of the family. The man respectable enough save for weekly bouts of drunkenness—the wife, worn and tired but devoted; and her sister, notorious as a prostitute who made a circuit of the neighbouring villages. This aunt was ill, so the child explained, too ill to crawl to the workhouse, and no one else would take her in, fearing scandal. The child had been sent out with the babies to have them out of the way and had wandered on and on. A tramp and a foul woman had frightened her, and she had been alarmed by thoughts of kidnapping and gipsies. To her they were gipsies, for all people who kidnapped babies were gipsies, even though they did not travel with a caravan laden with wickerwork chairs. From the tramps she had fled in sheer terror, sick with it—a wheel had sped from the crazy go-cart—it tilted and upset the babies. She had seized them and run on with them just this few yards, until she could go no further. She had not been followed, but fright had produced tears and weariness.

Lucy took charge of the little party, mended the go-cart, and trudged home with them, the child still clinging to her hand, happy once more, prattling and full of confidences. At some absurd remark, the misuse of a long word, Lucy laughed, and they arrived at the cottage in glee.

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At the door they were met by the mother, a flat-chested woman, pale, rather frowsy, with a weary expression. She contrived a smile of greeting, to display her toothlessness. She was loquacious and chattered of her misfortunes. Her sister was ill and near the end. Lucy asked to see her, and was taken upstairs, while she told the woman how she had encountered the children. The narrative did not excite much interest.

She heard from the room immediately at the head of the stairs to the right, a thin faint voice, babbling in a monotone, of men, and men, and men, and mournful nights and mournful days, bargaining, bargaining, protesting. She was afraid, and hesitated. The woman urged her into the room. There were neither blinds nor curtains to the window, and through it, for the cottage stood on the summit of the hill, Lucy looked out over a wide valley ; wide, shallow, held in green hills, wooded, bright in the sun, and far away a long low line of blue hills. Under the window in the garden the children were playing with a puppy, young things, all their terrors and fatigues forgotten. In the room lay the wreck of a woman, a thing wasted, driven by folly, hard words perhaps, cruel deeds, or natural revolt at first to the snatching of wild pleasures, then sheer want and so to greater depths of degradation, yet through every trial, agony and tribulation, a thing alive, dead to so much, lost to so much, but continuing. The head with its bloated face, eyes still beautiful through their weariness, rolled swiftly from side to side, and the thin faint voice ceased not to murmur, a stream of words flowing. The other woman stood by the bedside staring stupidly, helplessly. Her own sister ! Come to this—this queer babbling creature.

Lucy was filled with compassion for both women, the fruitful and the wasted, ignorant mother and the ignorant woman—the two destinies. Deeper compassion was for the wasted, for at the moment hers was the greater need. Her week's experience in nursing her little mistress in the town—left only two days ago, yet already faded into mistiness before so much reality—had taught her much, and though not deft nor light-fingered, Lucy quickly adjusted bed and covering to make greater ease and comfort for the sick woman. She made a cool compress for her head, of fruits made a cooling draught, and washed the poor neglected body.

She stayed through the afternoon, eating only an egg that was forced upon her by the sister, until the doctor came. An old friend—indeed, he had known Lucy from the first moment—he was surprised to find her at her post, and more at the things she

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had done, but wasted no words. He urged her to go, told her there would be more than she could bear. She shook her head, and remained sitting by the bedside.

The children were long in bed, and quiet, the puppy with them. Their mother wished also to be present, but was sent away. She tossed her apron over her head and went weeping softly.

Lucy and the doctor sat by the bedside. At half-past ten the doctor urged her to go home.

“Your mother will be anxious.”

“She’ll be in bed,” said Lucy, and refused to go.

The poor creature in the bed ceased her chatter and babble, and broke into a moan. Drugs were used, but the moaning continued. She screamed, and broke into foul words. Came a lull, and a certain strength, and sane eyes looked out of the head. She tried to speak, but pity for herself choked her, and tears flowed down her cheeks. That passed, strength ebbed, and slowly, slowly, agony gone, no struggle, the poor creature died.

The doctor turned to Lucy and nodded his head, and Lucy, wondering at nothing but the simplicity of it, turned and called softly to the sister. She came, red-eyed, and burst into a wailing, upbraiding herself. She knelt by the bedside and cried out, babbling snatches of oddly recollected prayers.

They calmed her, gave her instructions.

The doctor drove Lucy back to the farm in his dog-cart that was waiting outside in charge of a cheeky little boy, a cousin of Lucy’s, who greeted her with a friendly shout when she appeared, peered to make sure that the doctor was still inside the house, ran his arm round her waist and asked her for a kiss. She slapped his face and he swore at her with a mannish swagger. He was so funny that Lucy laughed. He was indignant and hurt, but skipped to the horse’s head as soon as the doctor appeared and stood smartly while his master climbed into the cart and took the reins. A cut of the whip, a click of the tongue, and they were off, the boy scrambling up behind.

A still night, and the road coiled in front of them white under the moon. The Doctor asked Lucy after her mother’s health and did she like her situation in the town, and was she going back?

“Yes. I’ll go back.”

“Don’t you think that’s a pity?”

“Why? No—I——”

“You’re the only child. It would be better if you were at

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the great house, if you must be in service. But I think you're a foolish girl."

"It's so dull—'ere——"

"Dull enough anywhere if you don't take things the right way."

He shouted a cheery good-night to a passing tramp. A surly greeting was growled in return.

Lucy wanted to touch his arm, but did not dare.

It occurred to him suddenly that she might be cold. She said not. He insisted and wrapped her in his overcoat. She peeped up at him out of it—he laughed. He liked the odd girl; thick and common stock as she appeared, there seemed to be a curious delicacy in her, and what she had done at the cottage was . . . he did not know how the deuce she had come to do it. Then he remembered odd things that he had heard about her, how she had nursed sick animals and rescued a dog from in front of a motor-car at risk of her life—how other girls of her own class had mocked her because she had never gone sweethearting, and how once he had seen her racing in the fields with her dog, laughing, singing old melodies. He liked her. Neither spoke, nor had either of them referred during the drive to events in the cottage.

When they drove up at the yard gate, Lucy removed his coat and, turning, quite simply held up her face to him. He kissed her kindly, then laughed. She descended. The dog-cart turned and went clattering and rocking down the lane.

The boy put his thumb to his nose and extended his fingers.

Lucy opened the gate and picked her way across the yard. She saw that there was a light in the kitchen. She heard a scratch and a match flared. It lit up the face of the Italian. She drew close to the wall of the garden, and crept along. He came cat-like and pounced on her, hand over her mouth, murmuring swift words to her:

"Ah! my little Lucia—Lucia—I 'ave waited, waited so long, I called, I called, but you did not come—not come—come now—come now——"

She loathed contact with him and struck out. He flung an arm round her to hold her arms. She struggled, broke loose, and ran. He floundered after her. Fear lent speed. She turned into the garden gate, slammed it after her, checked him: raced on into the house, to the kitchen. The noise she made had disturbed her father, who, hearing her pattering down the stone-flagged passage rose to his feet. She flew into his arms and clung to him, nearly hysterical. He gripped her, shook her,

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questioning. She held her hand, stretching fingers, in the direction of the door. They heard footsteps hurried, blundering in the dark, a body limping, banging amongst obstacles, and a voice squeaking inarticulately. Then the Italian plunged into the room, livid, eyes staring, hands in front crooked like claws and rocking and pawing the air. He moved towards Lucy, eyes fixed upon her as though he saw nothing, nothing else. Lucy cried out. Mr. Evans thrust her behind him. The Italian moved steadily forward. The farmer laid his great hand on his chest and stayed progress. The Italian took a great croaking breath and struggled against the force checking him; he thumped on the strong arm.

Lucy stood crouching, horrified in the presence of such madness.

The farmer's hand closed in a grip of the Italian's chest, picked him up, shook him, and then set him on his feet again, but the grip loosened not, rather tightened. The Italian hung like a limp doll.

"What is it, me dear?"

"'E's a bad man, feyther."

"Bad wi' you, Loocy?"

"'E's been bad wi' me, feyther." The great hand gripped tighter.

"When, Loocy?"

"Last night, feyther."

"Where you been to-day, Loocy?"

"I been nursin' a dead woman, feyther." Lucy's voice was dead, expressionless, hard, as though she were speaking of another woman.

"You been wi' this to-day, Loocy?" The hand shook the Italian.

"No, feyther. I come back wi' the Doctor, an' 'e jumped on me out o' the dark."

"Gi' me the whip, Loocy, an' go to bed."

"What you goin' to do, feyther?"

"Gi' me the whip, Loocy, an' go to bed."

Lucy tottered to the wall above the settle and took down the whip. One hand holding the arm of the settle to steady herself, she leaned forward holding the whip until her father could take it from her. She looked up into his face—it was cruel, hard—she breathed.

"No, feyther—no, feyther."

"Are ye a whore, Loocy?"

"No, feyther—no, feyther."

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"Go to bed, Loocy, go to bed." She tried to move, to take the whip from him, but could not. She turned and, feet dragging, slowly went. At the door she turned. The arm was raised and the Italian began to scream, eyes fixed in terror on the menacing arm. Lucy ran, fled upstairs to the long attic; undressed herself and plunged deep under her bedclothes, holding her ears.

Ella was fast asleep.

When Lucy ventured forth and peered into the darkness, the moon was gone, clouded, there was no sound. She judged that her father had gone to bed—and the Italian—oh! . . . a catch in her breath as she lay—seeing him vividly—limp under her father's strength—livid—terror-stricken: and the whip raised . . . the whip that she had given to her father. She had told her father. What would he say to her? Would he tell her mother? Her mother would think her a bad girl like—Ella. She knew Ella now—knew what she was, but clever, not like that poor woman whom she had come from seeing die. Her mother would think her a bad girl and send her away, for her mother forgave nothing, nor forgot. Like Ella—like Ella—Ella lying there, asleep almost within reach. She groped for her candle, lit it, thrust a round leg out of bed and sat with the candle held high peering in Ella's direction. She slid to her feet and shading the candle with her hand moved to lean over Ella. The sleeper's eyelids fluttered, the eyes gazed for a moment through slits and were covered again. Lucy bent close over the face, traced the lines of it with her finger, such an old worn face under its paint and powder. The mouth was open, loose. The face not pretty and round it such thin, wispy, short hair. She had thrown an arm out and her night-dress was open at the neck. Neither shoulders nor arm were pretty.

And Dick loved this woman, a woman who hated children: Dick, whom all the children in the village loved and followed, begging for a ride on the broad shoulder, or diving in the huge pockets of his rough coat for the lollipops that were often to be found there.

Lucy moved back, Ella stirred uneasily, opened her eyes and murmured. She sat bolt upright, rubbing her eyes.

"What you doin' to me, Lucy Evans?"

"Go to sleep, Ella. It's awright."

"Where you been—off wi' Mr. Conti? What d'e give you?"

"I been nursin' a woman till she died—a woman like you."

"What d'you mean?"

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“ A woman as took men——”

Ella was on the defensive in a moment—she leaned forward and her first clenched.

“ Say that again and I’ll—— Where was you last night ? ”

Ella looked up keenly at her. Lucy put out the candle and Ella laughed, hardly laughed, more a snigger, and for the first time Lucy felt shame. Blood rushed to her temples, and she trembled. She turned to grope to her bed again.

She looked out of the window.

“ Oh ! ”

The sky was a dull deep red, and great banks of smoke floated away. Sparks flew. Fire somewhere. Fire ! She ran down to the bedroom of her father and mother, in, and waked them. Then up, clothed herself, out and down again, no word to Ella.

Rover was barking furiously in the yard. The cocks were crowing, mistaking the great light for dawn, and the beasts in pen, shippin, and sty were uneasy. Dick was down just before her, out and racing with the hose to the tap. Her father appeared, her mother at the window screaming orders and directions.

Men sprang up mysteriously from the earth and appeared suddenly out of the darkness, to form a fire-gang, to pass buckets of water from hand to hand, and back empty, Dick at the head, casting on the ricks. Two were alight. They must burn, but the others must be saved and the barns. A third burst into flame, one removed from the other two and in a group of four. An incendiary !

Mr. Evans ran in that direction. He found the Italian crawling away, almost spent, a box of matches in his hands. He had stopped so, for a paroxysm of coughing had made movement impossible. Mr. Evans heaved him to his feet and dragged him back to the throng. Angry hoots greeted him, and some one threw a handful of mud that caught him under the chin.

The fire brigade came clattering, and two policemen. Mr. Conti was given in charge.

The whole village turned out to see the spectacle, and when the fire was got under, the ricks gutted, no further damage done, friends thronged the kitchen to commiserate, question, ask about the Italian, the amount of insurance, the first discovery. Gooseberry wine was produced, and beer.

A policeman came to ask the name of the incendiary, who maintained a sullen silence and would answer nothing. Mr. Evans gave his name and all particulars that he knew, the time of

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the discovery and other details for the charge-sheet. The Italian was led off followed by a hooting, jeering crowd.

It was four o'clock in the morning before the last of the curious left the farm.

Long before, Lucy had crept up to bed and to sleep.

Ella had slept through it all.

VI

The business of the farm went on. Mr. Evans accepted the disaster resignedly, though it meant considerable pecuniary loss by insufficient insurance. He was kind to Lucy, more expansive, confidential, kinder and nearer to her than she remembered him to have been. They spent much time together and he talked to her of his early days, something of courtship, and early struggles. He confessed to a dislike of Ella, but he was pleasant with her, joked heavily with her, made her furious with coarse pleasantries at the expense of her complexion, asking Dick what it tasted like, and of her company manners, which were his constant delight. He avoided all reference to Lucy's unhappy experience, or to the dreadful scene in the kitchen.

One morning, however, near the end of the allotted week of holiday, a letter arrived for Lucy. She was not in when it arrived, and Mrs. Evans, who took it from the postman, was for opening it. Her husband restrained her, but not from examining its post-mark of Chester, the large straggling handwriting.

"That there Italian," she cried, and broke into a torrent of abuse, dwelling particularly on the fact that he had not paid for his week's board and lodging.

Mr. Evans averred that he had paid right enough. Whereupon an altercation arose, in the midst of which Lucy returned.

"A letter f'r ye, me dear, fro' yer——"

Mr. Evans silenced her and they both sat watching Lucy who had blushed and trembled a little. She took the letter and tore open the envelope. There were four closely written sheets, smudged, blotted, the paper blistered with tears. The letter was headed "Prison" and plunged immediately into a wild tirade of reproach, remorse, tenderness, bitterness: flights of poetry, dreadful obscenities, love-words and curses; threats of vengeance, of self-destruction: tangled philosophy; self-glorification. Lucy understood little of it, so much of it was in words unknown to her, but it moved her, and she hung her head. Her mother snatched the letter and began to read. She had

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spelled slowly through the first sheet when Lucy sprang to her feet and held out her hand for it.

Mrs. Evans had read enough to understand. Lucy held her ground, but Mr. Evans hung his head and looked hang-dog, guilty.

Nothing was said. The old woman's slow brain was revolving the discovery. She had no humour to aid her, and the truth, the fact was very bitter. Two words framed themselves in her mind, "gone wrong," a thing irreparable. She opened her lips to upbraid, to cast scathing words, venomous. Lucy's calmness checked her, in a degree shocked her. She sat heavily in the great chair and wept. Her instinct was to scold, but the offence was too great; she had no words to compass it.

At the least sign Lucy would have gone to her, but none came, and slowly she turned, tears brimming her eyes, shook her head and went out slowly.

The old woman turned in a fury on her husband:

"Did ye know?"

"She telled me—the night after. I arf killed 'im, an' 'e crawled out into the dark, like a slug 'e did, an' set fire to t' ricks. Sunday night it was."

"An' ye could 'old that to yersel' an' never tell me nowt—yer own girl gone wrong, an' never tell me nowt."

She wailed. He saw that any words were useless—but tried manfully to bear against her resentment.

"We'd best keep 'er 'ere now—case anythink sh'd 'appen——"

She said nothing.

"I reck'n we c'n do nowt in this world but be kind, missus."

Still she said nothing.

"She's all we got, ole woman. All we got, an' she be a soft, tender, beautiful thing, missus. We'd best keep 'er 'ere now—best keep 'er."

The old woman turned round in her chair, head lowered and looked at him. Her face was more than ever hard.

"She don't—love me," she said. There was finality in her tone, the note of decision formed.

Mr. Evans ran his fingers through his beard, bit the nail of his right thumb and tore it right down to the quick.

He went to look for Lucy. She was gone. She had stayed for a moment by the garden-gate leaning against it pondering. Then she had turned round the house and out through the orchard. Dick came running after her, and Rover.

Dick walked by her side for some minutes.

"You be crying, Lucy m'dear," he said.

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"Oh, Dick," she said and laid her hand on his arm. So they walked a little way. He would have led her towards the stream, but she cried "No," and they walked away from the sea, until they came to a little wood of beech and oak. On a little bank they sat, under nodding bracken, by soft ferns. Rover lay at their feet. Scurrying rabbits could not lure him.

Dick stooped and patted Rover, whose tiny stump of tail wagged in acknowledgment.

"I 'it a man last night—Tom Bewman—fer speakin foul o' you, Lucy."

Lucy hugged his arm.

"I'm goin', Dick dear——"

"On'y back to t' town, Lucy m'dear."

"I dunno—Yes. I'll go back there for a bit anyway. F'r a bit I'll go : I 'aven't give them notice, y' see. I got to go."

"Ye'll come again—'appen."

"No, Dick."

"'Appen ye'll come again."

"No, Dick— Oh! Dick, ye'll be 'appy w'en I'm gone ; an' wed, an' 'ave little 'uns. An' take Rover, I give 'im t'ye ; an' keep 'im w'en 'e can't work no more— Oh! Dick."

She rubbed the back of her hand across her eyes, and sniffed.

A sob shook her, Dick held her hand. The tragedy of Lucy in tears, sobbing, was too appalling. He rubbed his knee with the palm of his hand.

"Ella spoke foul o' ye, Lucy—she did, Ella did. I'm quit o' 'er."

"Dick—Dick—Dick." She turned to him, thumped on his knee, she was so glad. She forgot her own sorrow : she was so glad for Dick. She looked at him, sun through showers. She could say nothing, for there was nothing that she might say which would not in some sort be a betrayal of Ella, her friend, so she had called her. Dick was happy again, to see her smile, to meet her eyes and see the smile in them.

Rover raced away, tore down in search of rabbits.

Dick called. "Hey!—Rover, Rover, Rover. . . ." The dog was gone, though they could hear him racing in the woods behind them.

"Cannot ye stay . . . now, Lucy m'dear?"

"No, Dick. . . . 'Tisn't along o' you 'at I got to go."

"I'll wed ye, Lucy—Stay an' we'll be wed."

"Dick, don't—Dick dear—I been like a mad thing. . . ."

"Et's truth, then?"

Lucy was silent, hung her head. Dick's face set. He rose

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to his feet and walked slowly away. Then he turned and came back again.

“ I’ll wed ye, m’dear, m’dear. Say ye will.”

“ I cannot Dick, m’dear, my very dear. I love ’ee. I love ’ee. I love ’ee, so dearly, dear—I’d bear ye little uns I would—I would. So beautiful an’ soft—soft ’ands, little ’ands. . . . I’d be yer dear, an’ kind to ye, an’ lovin’, I would. . . . But I be nowt, Dick—nowt, a thing o’ nowt.”

She was speaking softly, slowly and so tenderly.

“ I can give ’ee nowt, Dick . . . ye don’t unnerstan’ love, Dick—a man don’t unnerstan’ love, ’e canna. . . . I’ll go away, Dick, an’ ’appen there’ll be a little ’un o’ me own, one o’ me own to share wi’ no one. . . . Dick, dear, no . . . I’ll go far, where no one knows me. . . .”

Dick made no answer. He was puzzled. She took his arm in silence, and they walked back to the farm. It was some time before Rover discovered their departure.

Mrs. Evans had shut herself in her room and refused to see her. She said good-bye to her father, kissed him many times. He lifted her up in his great arms and kissed her. She promised to write to him. He gave her money, three sovereigns in a purse.

Dick wished to drive her with her little package to the station. She insisted on walking, and walking unaccompanied. She made no inquiry for Ella.

Her father and Dick took her to the gate of the yard and stood watching the brave little figure breast the rise, stay for a moment against the sky to turn and wave a hand, then disappear. Without a word the two men, strong, stupid, dull men who loved her, went their ways to work.

When, later, inquiries were made for Ella, it was discovered that she too had gone, by an early train. She had called at the public house in the village on the way to the station to drink, and on being recognised and questioned as to events at the farm had poured forth a torrent of venomous abuse and vile scandal.

The Wife of Altamont

By Violet Hunt

VI

“GRACIOUS ! How my corns are shooting !” said Evangeline Simmons, as in the company of the woman she loved with a fearful love, and admired against her own and her parent’s will she made her painful way down the little “parlour drive” of “The Pines.” “And just look at the berries ! It’s going to be a hard winter. And we shall have those wretched unemployed about again, with their six children and one wife starving at home !”

The careless speech reminded Mrs. Altamont of the plight of Little Katie. But she proceeded to answer Evangeline categorically.

“Get something for them at Wellington’s—the corns, I mean. They had a wonderful cure for them there, my Georgie told me, last winter. And do hold up your long trained tweeds, Evangeline ! You’re covering me with mud. I wish there were sumptuary laws, and that no one in our position was permitted to wear trains.”

Evangeline began to expostulate with her mentor, but Betsey disregarded her.

“Did you notice that girl who came in about Albany ? And what short skirts *she* had ?”

“Ah—but she was tall and slight. Lucky for her. Do you think she was a hospital nurse ? Or a Suffragette ?”

“Neither. She left her card case in the hall. Madge will have to send it back. I looked in it while you were hunting for your umbrella. She was the Lady Dobrée de Saye.”

“Good gracious ! . . . But I don’t care for titles, do you ?”

“Yes, I do, rather,” replied Mrs. Altamont frankly. “They sound so clean and clear—not tradey or suburban. I knew she was somebody decent the moment she came in—some smart crank, or so.”

“And that’s why you advised Madge to take her upstairs ?”

“Partly. Just to see if anything came of it.”

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“ Nothing did.”

“ Madge didn’t rise to the occasion, you see.”

“ Now you——”

“ Oh, I’d have got hold of her somehow. Without pushing or vulgarity, mind, Evangeline. I hope I’ve got enough *savoir-faire* for that. She and I’d have caught on. It would have been a door opened on to the world—for me. I’d have liked that, of course, but——” Her face saddened. “ It could not have lasted. Her people would have interfered—my circumstances, naturally ! ”

“ You look so sad, Betsey, all of a sudden ! ”

“—As if the idea had just been brought home to me, eh ? When as a matter of fact I live looking at it, day by day, facing a blank wall that cuts me off from every possible experience. If it wasn’t for my—for Miss Altamont, I think I’d go mad ! ”

“ I didn’t know, although I’ve immense power of sympathy, that you felt it all as much as that ! You’re always so gay and laughing ! ”

“ That’s my temperament,” the other retorted, laughing. “ So I get no pity. Here we are at Wellington’s. Hey for *The Red Corpuscles*. ”

“ And hey for the corn-cure ! ” echoed Evangeline, with imitative cheerfulness. She admired Betsey enormously in her pose of mirthful Mariana of a Wimbledon grange.

They entered the funnel-shaped emporium of Messrs. Wellington. A long counter devoted to physical amelioration led on to that consecrated to mental panacea. Evangeline stopped at the first, and tried to attract the attention of a busy salesman.

“ I’ll go on to the library and join you again,” said Mrs. Altamont. “ They are so perfectly sure not to have the book ! ”

But before she could get any further the light of the door was filled up and a burly man dashed into the shop, anxious, seemingly, not so much to buy a drug to allay pain, as to be the first to impart news to a friend at the counter. The clerk whose duty it was to attend to Evangeline leaned towards the newcomer, who, however, spoke loud and Betsey and Evangeline caught snatches of his terrific piece of information :

“ Old man . . . shot in two places . . . head . . . his own secretary . . . turned the weapon on himself . . . only blown out his jaw and one eye, poor devil ! ” . . .

“ Good Heavens, you don’t say so ! One and elevenpence halfpenny, Miss,” said the punctilious clerk, turning politely to Evangeline, anxious, perhaps, to show that firmly ingrained business habits could stand the impact of even news like this

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without pretermission of the work in hand. Then and not till then, he stooped to the informant to hear more.

"Oh, Betsey," pleaded Miss Simmons, fumbling with her bag, nervously concentrated on the matter in hand, "do lend me sixpence!"

Betsey held out her leather purse and Evangeline gratefully prized out the money.

"Who has been killed, do you say?" Betsey asked, turning to the newcomer quietly. The clerk had gone for change and the burly man was the centre of an eager group. He looked in the direction of and answered Betsey's neat voice, however.

"Old Sir Joris Veere. Veere, Avercamp and Veere. He's dead as nails by now. Fell like a steer, so the man said who saw it. And he says it's all about a girl, too. Here, I must be off!"

He departed, anxious to be delightfully beforehand with the newspapers in some more quarters. Evangeline, having got her change, turned to Betsey who stood dumfounded. The crowd melted away.

"We'd better go, I suppose. What about *The Red Corpuscles*? Did you ask?"

"I haven't been in there—" She seemed mazed.

"I forgot," said Evangeline. "Sir Joris Veere—it makes a difference to you?"

"For goodness' sake, don't talk about it here!" said Betsey impatiently. "There's the 'bus—passes our door! Good-bye!"

She caught her 'bus, without calling upon it to stop. It was running full tilt. Evangeline saw her resolute impenetrable face fronting the window as she was borne past.

VII

Betsey declared that she never could think about anything but clothes in a 'bus. She could not even think of clothes now, so her mind was a conscious blank during the ten minutes' drive. She alighted in front of her own door, said good-night to the conductor, who knew her well, and admired and respected her lightning entries on to the footboard of his 'bus, and rang the bell. Wilfrid, of course, carried the only latch-key.

Even then she did not think. The essential notion that filled all her brain place was evidenced in the first thing she said to her maid who, smiling imperturbably, opened the door.

"Miss Altamont—no one is to go near her! not even Mr. Altamont—he's not come in, has he?" She was breathless. Georgie was calm.

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"No, mum. There's a gentleman waiting for you, mum."

Mr. Altamont's hand went to her forehead.

"Where've you put him?"

"In the dining-room, mum. There's a bit of fire still in there."

"That's right!" She handed her the paper bag with the blue felt hat in it. "Here, take this!"

"I think it's the gas!" volunteered Georgie.

"Very likely," said her mistress, standing in front of a little mirror in the hall, and poking at a strayed lock on her forehead with a hair-pin. . . . To gain time! For what? She wondered. . . . "Bring a lamp as soon as you can. I'm going in to him now."

She entered the dining-room, going down the one step, over which she boggled, though she was perfectly used to it. She was nervous lest it should not be "the gas."

A stiff, correct, spruce person, who had been sitting with his hands on his knees in the soft obscurity, his bulk irradiated from below by the nearly extinct fire, rose at her entry.

"I'm so sorry—she hasn't given you a light!" Her affectation of bustle was unbecoming to her. "Have you been waiting long?"

"It doesn't matter," the man interrupted. He fostered a singular calm round him, as he spoke, neither fast nor slow, with the curious, civil inwardness of the British official. "Excuse me, madam—you are Mrs. Altamont?"

She acquiesced, timorously—a mouse that sees the trap it will shortly run into.

"I have a message for you—from a man in hospital."

"Mr. Altamont?" She had always known it, she realised, now.

"Yes. He's badly hurt, but not dead. He shot Sir Joris Veere at his residence in Cavendish Square, at twenty minutes past four this afternoon and then tried to take his own life."

He made a movement forward to support the woman who did not totter. Her face he could see but ill in the dimness.

"Had you heard?"

"I heard in a shop near here, that there had been a murder, but not that Wilfrid— They said something about a secretary! . . . Put it down, Georgie, and go!" She spoke peremptorily. "Remember what I told you about Miss Altamont."

"Yes, m'm!" Georgie deposited a hastily lit, still evilly smelling lamp on the centre table and fled. The detective continued:

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"The police were called in by Mr. Ernest Rose Veere, his nephew, who heard the shots in the hall, but was not in time to prevent it. They found both men on the floor. Sir Joris was stone dead, your husband unable to speak. We took him to St. Frithiof's close by. He was made to write on a slate. And a card was found in his pocket with the address. The coroner sent me here to fetch you."

"What did Wilfrid write on the slate?" she asked, melting.

"Only one name, Ada. Your name, I presume?"

"No. Mine is Elizabeth. I will give you Ada's address, Mrs. Cox, Twenty-one Burckardt's Grove, Lordship Lane, Camberwell."

Her colour had risen. All through the interview she had never really lost it. Inspector Whortleberry, as he gravely noted the address she gave him, scented something painful, some squalid unpleasant family circumstance such as it often, in the exercise of his profession, fell to his lot to discover.

"Do I understand, madam, that you prefer not to come to your husband?"

"Don't blame me!" she replied. "I was not sent for. Mrs. Cox will go. We should clash."

"He may not live through the night!"

She resented his insistence, and retorted violently:

"All the better! Then he will escape being tried for murder—murder of his own father!"

This was news to Inspector Whortleberry, but he did not betray it. He allowed the lady, who was evidently becoming a little hysterical, to run on.

"It would simply kill his mother, this! She must not know."

"His mother?"

"Yes, his poor mother! She is an old lady, and she's an invalid, and she's in this house, and it's no use your asking to see her, for I should not allow it! You want her help to convict him, I know, but it's no good."

"The conviction is sure, madam. There is no question of that. But we should be glad of any document—a letter or anything of that kind, that would assist us in establishing motive."

"There's a letter in his pocket now that would do that. Oh, no, it's here. I forgot. If you'll promise me to make no attempt to go near her, I'll undertake to get it for you."

"I would not disturb the old lady for the world, madam," the detective assured her, correctly, "but if you'll get us the letter you speak of, we shall be very much obliged."

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“ You won’t follow me upstairs or anything ? ”

“ On no account. I give you my word.”

She smiled at him, a smile whose uncalled-for sweetness, with its underlying bitterness, had no particular significance for him, except as an assurance of goodwill and a sign that she meant to be sensible. He had not studied the early Italian Masters, and the face of Monna Lisa. The wife of Altamont left the room, and Inspector Whortleberry remained standing, dutiful, patient, *routinier*, without curiosity, imagination, or perspicacity.

Betsey walked upstairs very quietly and into Miss Altamont’s room. That lady sat reading the works of Froude, the cards were pushed aside to make room for her book on the green baize table.

“ Who’s here ? ” she said. “ That wretched Georgie came and took away one of my lamps ! ”

“ The gas man. There’s a stoppage, he thinks, in the pipe—our pipe I am afraid—under the front door, where it goes into the main. The company ’ll do it, and charge us cost price, unless we prefer to give the job to our own man.”

“ Let *them* do it, certainly—cheaper,” said Miss Altamont. “ What is it you want that you are standing over me like that ? ”

“ I want Ada’s letter, please.”

“ What for ? ”

“ To read over again. It’s been bothering me.”

“ And me too. Take it. I do wish there was some way, without utterly pauperising them, of sending them a little to go on with ? ”

“ I’ll think about it,” said Betsey. “ Suppose we do without gas ? ”

She whipped the letter out of the gaping pocket, and departed.

“ This paper,” said Mr. Whortleberry, tapping the pocket book in which he had deposited it, “ I will keep safely, and talk to you about it to-morrow, when we meet in the court.”

“ Oh, have I to go anywhere public ? Have I got to be mixed up in it ? ”

“ You are his wife, madam. Twenty-four hours after—it’s the rule. The inquest will probably be held in Cavendish Square where the body lies.”

Betsey’s fair face contracted with sudden real horror. An old grey-haired man lying dead ! His head dabbled in blood ? The inspector pitied her. . . .

“ Perhaps, after all, you will not be needed. The secretary

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was in an inner room and saw it all. And young Mr. Veere, Sir Joris's nephew, was in the hall and heard their voices, and the shots. He rang the bell and rushed to his uncle. The butler got there in time to see Altamont turn the weapon upon himself. But the Coroner's Court—I am afraid you will be bound to appear there! I will let you know. I will come and fetch you, if you like."

"No, thank you," said Mrs. Altamont, who had regained all her composure. "I must think of Miss Altamont. She's the point. I have already had to tell her some lies about your presence here. Very few people come to this house and she always contrives to get wind of them somehow. Deadly curious she is, like all old people. So I'll come alone, and then she will be able to think I have gone out shopping. Wilfrid shall not have the satisfaction of killing his mother as well as his father!"

She opened the door and let him out into the street; her kind smile of adieu and sidelong glance came almost mechanically.

The officer noted it, though not in a book.

Then the wife of Altamont shut the door. All life buzzed round her; she had been violently flung into the arena of the passions, she lived at last! The clock on the stairhead struck six.

VIII

Dinner! Common, everyday dinner!

Miss Altamont must dine; Mrs. Altamont must appear to dine. Georgie, apparently, knew nothing. But her mistress did not trust her. Servants always knew everything. And if she did not know she ought to be told, so as to ensure her co-operation in the task of keeping the old lady ignorant. But Betsey shrank from opening up the subject, the first words spoken, like the first shots in an engagement, would let loose the pent-up horror, and break through her crust of calm.

To-morrow it would be all over, in the papers, in Georgie's own special "tragedy" journal—she would wait. . . .

"Mr. Altamont is not likely to be home to-night," she hazarded, as she stirred a little mixture over the kitchen fire.

"No, mum."

"And, Georgie, do you want to go out this evening?"

"Not particular, mum."

"Then you would oblige me very much by staying at home."

A useless precaution, after all, so she thought, the minute she had spoken, for the postman—a dozen persons would probably come to the door, and inform Georgie. Why shouldn't Georgie

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know? She ought to know! She would know to-morrow morning? So her unquiet thoughts circled on themselves as she stirred aimlessly, clumsily, spattering the frothy white spume on the iron plate of the stove.

"Take care, mum, it's just a going to boil over!" screamed Georgie. "Mum, what's the matter?"

"Don't you see?" said Mrs. Altamont portentously pointing to the flakes of white that lay, billowing into roundness, and slowly frizzling at their edges, splayed out on the black iron.

"It won't matter, I can soon wipe it up."

"No, it won't matter: you can wipe it up; it's blood."

"It's milk, mum—whatever have come to you?" said Georgie, calmly leaving the fried milk to form a rusty blob on the stove. She took matters out of her mistress's hands, and set to work to prepare the bread-sauce herself, while the latter stood and stared at the hideous patch, now diminishing and rapidly turning brown. She no longer saw it red; the accompanying vision of the study in Cavendish Square and the clotted spattered carpet there, had faded, too, leaving a horror of Wilfrid's disgusting, squalid act that could never be overcome. She allowed Georgie to snatch the tray from her shaking hands, and carry it for her to the foot of the stairs. Georgie knew, decidedly she knew, that there was something wrong. No harm in Georgie! . . .

"Let me take it for you, mum, do, as far as the door."

Mrs. Altamont made no resistance but followed the little kind "general" upstairs. There, Georgie whispered, delivering over the tray to her mistress's hands:

"I don't suppose, mum, you feel like the cold meat this evening. Just let me toss you up an omelick!"

Mrs. Altamont laughed thinly. Georgie "toss" anything!

"Very well, Georgie. For supper, say? When I have got Miss Altamont to bed! I daresay I shall be quite hungry!"

Miss Altamont raised her head. Her daughter-in-law entered the room, with the sensations of an actress entering on the scene, but with none of the dash and vigour that pertains to egotistical entry, and the old woman noticed it.

"How leaden-footed you are, Betsey, to-night? Has Wilfrid come back yet?"

"No. He sent a telegram to say we are not to expect him."

"My lord is unusually considerate! Dated from where?"

"Camberwell," said Betsey, with a jerk.

Miss Altamont's face grew grimmer. She looked away, down at Betsey's feet.

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“What’s that—at the bottom of your dress, you slut?”

“Yes, I know,” replied Betsey eagerly, “the braid’s off, I must mend it. I wish I wasn’t so untidy.”

“Don’t wish yourself different, you’ll do as you are,” Miss Altamont observed almost fondly. “It’s part of your easy-going character. If you had anything in the nature of a fixed principle about you, you could not put up with Wilfrid!”

“I do that for your sake!”

“Well, you won’t have to do it much longer for my sake.”

Mrs. Altamont shivered. The cruel, hard, precise voice went on:

“I know it. So do you. The warrant’s out. . . . Why do you jump? . . . The warrant for my death, I mean. A slow aneurysm, that’s what I’ve got—may leak any moment! You may as well get used to the idea, Betsey—I have. Think of the cistern, and that beastly old plumber’s business we used to dread so—that will keep it before your mind. I can play with it even. Just a shock, and one of those clumsy big arteries! . . . God sends out careless men sometimes, like Jones the plumber, who don’t care, any more than Jones’s man does, if he gives the other boss, Death, a job or no!”

“Oh, my dear, do stop! I don’t want to keep horrors before my mind; I can take care of you without.”

“Very pretty and feminine! But it’s better, in the long run to be mentally armour-plated, like me, you’ll find. Nothing affects me or ever did. But you, Betsey, you’d go over like a nine-pin, or a dressmaker’s dummy, the first thing that happens to you. Then you’ll lose your bearings—make the mistake of your life—I beg your pardon, the second mistake! Wilfrid has the honour of being the first, hasn’t he?”

“I really don’t know what I’d do?” Betsey murmured, ignoring the allusion to her marriage. “It’s all a matter of what kind of make of heart you’ve got. Mine’s splendid.”

“Yes, I should say so. But then Life doesn’t touch you, at least that’s what I always hear you complain of. It’s rather revolting to think, isn’t it, that I, whose brain is so steeled to endurance, fine-grained, and tempered, should have been furnished, as I have been, at the General Giving out of tools we call Birth, with an inferior make of heart, that may fail me at any time! I am rather like a person under an operation, whose calm is guaranteed by an anæsthetic, and yet, the mere shock of being cut may have an opposite result! The brain has nothing whatever to say to it; the unruly cells take the law into their

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own hands. It knocks all that balderdash they talk about a separate soul and so on completely on the head ? ”

There was an inquiring note, in spite of the polemical arrogance with which the old woman spoke, pathetically underlying her firm expression of opinion. It disquieted Betsey. She was used to the senile vanity and pride of intellect which old Miss Altamont had transmitted to her son, it disgusted her in the son ; she considered it a delightfully healthy symptom in the mother. But this new note of gain-giving ?—she wondered if the thing that had happened, if some subtle effluence from the great moral disaster which had befallen their house, was even now beginning to permeate matter, penetrating the kindly doors and walls that warded off from knowledge the person most interested ? Had this very sanctum of age and infirmity been reached at last ?

She sturdily cut up the roast chicken, saying, in an off-hand manner, “ Well, the main point is, that you sha’n’t have a shock if I can help it ! ”

Miss Altamont ate well. She had two helpings of chicken and some blancmange. She liked her dinner and commended Betsey’s bread-sauce—“ the most difficult thing in the world to make, my dear, and generally confided to the kitchen-maid.”

When the tablecloth had been removed, and the green baize shone forth again, she looked hard at Betsey.

“ You made that sauce, my dear, and scorched your face doing it. You look hot.”

“ Indigestion,” remarked Mrs. Altamont.

“ Oh, you had your dinner first, had you ? Then you may as well sit down and we will have a talk.”

“ May I leave the window open ? ”

“ Yes, certainly. I shall be glad of a little air.”

Betsey fervently opened the window looking on the High Street. A delicious breath of mild air, with the faintest touch of frost in it, rushed into the room. Miss Altamont drew a long breath of enjoyment.

“ You’re sure it won’t hurt you ? ” the younger woman said anxiously. “ I shall only leave it a minute or two.”

“ You’ll leave it just as long as I say it is to be left,” Miss Altamont bade her imperiously. Then she laughed. “ I don’t mean to be cross to you, Betsey, you’re a good girl and the joy of my poor old life. Sit down and subside. I want to drivel to you.”

Mrs. Altamont sat down within the room. The standard lamp was between her and the window and Miss Altamont’s

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chair and fitted table. The old lady could not see her face, which had now resumed more or less its normal aspect, for Betsey was young.

"For a stoic," remarked Miss Altamont, "I am a good deal plagued with reminiscences to-night. Wilfrid and his corals! Think of that! Corals before morals! He was a dear little baby. They're all alike then. Once, only once, I showed him to his father, and his father kissed him. Just to please me. I was sillier—more sentimental in those days. Never passionate. It wasn't in me. And it would have done for me! We were about to part, then, not in bitterness, as you can judge by what I tell you. We just dissolved the contract, it had grown inconvenient. To him. He stuffed a hundred pound note into the baby's hand. . . . Then he turned to me, and said, 'It's a good thing you don't love me, isn't it, Julia?' You see I had convinced him of that. Business!"

"But didn't you—a little?"

"Not even to justify myself in your eyes, Betsey, will I own to the littlest, teeniest bit. Yet he was a fascinating man. And he was my only lover. I was perfectly faithful to him, though he did not exact it. And wasn't, of course, to me. But he played the game! Everything was cut and dried—dull, even. I knew he didn't mean to keep me always. Perfectly square, he was. He meant to marry, so as to have children. And then—bad luck!—he didn't manage to marry. I don't say didn't have children. A many, doubtless! Other little Wilfrids."

Betsey was silent a moment. Then she observed:

"You are the wickedest, dearest old woman in the world. Sure you're not catching cold?"

"No. I sha'n't catch cold till I want to. Betsey, listen to me. It's rather interesting—if you care about that sort of thing! This afternoon while you were out I heard the voice of Joris distinctly. I have heard it before,—at crises of my life. Yet we weren't really intimate. Odd, isn't it? These telepathic messages are quite irresponsible! I wonder if Wilfrid did succeed in getting speech of him, and if they spoke of me? That would account for it."

"Would it?"

"They say so, the psychologists. Thought transference. Brain waves. All nonsense—But rather fun!"

Again Betsey had the vision of the brain-shattering bullet and the bald head prone. . . . She spoke up, though, flippantly, for it was incumbent on her to treat matters lightly. Miss Altamont was in a somewhat nervous excited state. She was

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sure of it. "Oh, you mean a sort of mental marconigram!" she exclaimed.

"Something of the sort. Poor Joris! I wonder, has he worn as well as I have? If so, he must be a fine old man by now? What's that they're shouting, Betsey?"

Betsey apprehended, at once. The danger was imminent. A little London screech owl was coming round the corner where London Villas debouched into the High Road, opposite Worksop House. . . .

She rose hastily, ejaculating. "Cold. . . . The window."

"Be quiet! I want to hear!" said Miss Altamont, decisively. "Please to send out and buy a paper!"

The peccant piece of braid on the bottom of Betsey's dress caught in the supports of the standard lamp, and threw her to her knees. She surrendered, instinctively, not to upset the lamp. A choice of evils had presented itself to her in a flash, but practically no other course was open to her. . . . The shrill-voiced lad was actually under the window, extolling his wares.

"Special! Murder! Murder! Sir Joris Veere. . . . Horrible murder. . . ."

He passed away. The movements of Georgie were heard below, frantically unbolting bars, and flinging out of the front door, with a loud call to the boy.

Then came the clash of the window, as Mrs. Altamont brought it down with a rush, breaking the cord, but too late! The mischief was done. The old mother had heard.

"Find out! Find out! Buy a paper!" She spoke quite clearly. "Wilfrid! Wilfrid has killed his father, hasn't he? Be quick! . . ." She bent and settled in her chair and began to speak lower, in a sharp concise whisper, as if, practical even *in extremis*, she were husbanding her dying resources. . . .

"You knew it? Tell me, tell me, quick! Don't faint, I'll be dead before you come to! The famous aneurysm! . . . I want to speak. . . . I've something to say . . . Wilfrid . . . murder! . . . No, don't touch me, I sha'n't fall. . . ."

The voice died down. The breathing became monstrous . . . portentous. . . .

Betsey's arm was round the old woman. She supported the shoulders as the head fell forward. Miss Altamont did not slip down in the chair, her dress was stuff and the chair covered with some rough substance, and the scooped table in front upheld her. . . .

Betsey had never seen death, but she thought—nay, knew, with an animal's practical instinctive knowledge—that this must

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be it. Miss Altamont's breathing was not like any suspiration she knew. Still retaining her hold on the old woman's shoulders, she lunged forward with one arm and reached the hand-bell that stood on the table in front, and rang it vigorously.

Georgie appeared.

"Hold your tongue, Georgie, and go for Dr. Gedge, quick! Don't stop to put a hat on."

Mrs. Altamont stood for five mortal minutes leaning half over the back of the chair. It was torture. Her forehead was pearly with sweat. She had not yet looked the dead woman in the face, framed by its immaculate upspringing frills. She dared not.

Georgie returned, cowering, to the door.

"Don't whisper. Have you got him?"

"He's coming, mum," Georgie nearly shouted, and at her back appeared the form of Dr. Gedge. Betsey leaned forward. She still did not dare to abandon her position as supporter of the inert mass.

"Come here! Come here, quick!" she begged. "Save her, can you? She's my darling, she's my——"

Dr. Gedge gently put her aside. She came up to time and submissively helped him to move the patience board away that penned the body in so nicely. Still it did not collapse. The semblance of lifelike pose was dreadful. Georgie, unless directly commanded to help, hung back. Betsey, bright-eyed, feverish, like a young Bacchante, with awestruck eyes averted from the image of death, assisted the doctor to lay the tall woman on her bed, where he slowly and methodically verified the fact of decease.

"How did it happen?" he asked her.

"She got a shock."

"Ah, yes! The murder of Sir Joris, eh?"

Betsey nodded. "I didn't tell her."

"Why did you let her hear?"

"I couldn't stop it. Those boys yelled it out under the open window. They ought to be whipped."

"Tcha! When did she dine?"

"Half an hour ago."

"Well?"

"Yes, rather."

"Well, listen now. I'll go home at once and telephone for a nurse——"

"What for? Can't Georgie and I——"

"She'd be no good for that."

"I don't want any one to touch Miss Altamont but me."

"Nonsense! You can help the nurse." He spoke to

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Georgie. "Go down to your kitchen, and have some hot water ready. Now, Mrs. Altamont, do you mind——"

"I mind nothing."

"Very good. Stay here, then, till I come back."

"You *will* come back?"

Her lovely distracted eyes travelled to his, and the doctor felt their appeal in full.

"As soon as I can."

"There are such a lot of dreadful things to do——"

"I'll take them all off your hands, as far as possible. I mean about your mother-in-law—register the death and so on. I am afraid I can't——"

"The inspector says I'll have to attend something to-morrow—within twenty-four hours?"

"Oh, I daresay they'll be able to manage the preliminary inquiry without you. There were plenty of people about who saw it. But you'll probably have to go in a couple of days or so to the coroner's court. *That* you can't get off."

"I don't see why not," she said violently. "There's no defence, that I can see. The only decent thing about it is that he tried to take his own life after killing his father and mother. Oh, why couldn't they let him die? . . . Why must they be carrying him off to a hospital, saving him to be hanged? He *will* be hanged. I hope he'll be hanged. I long for him to be hanged. He has killed the best woman that ever lived."

"Not killed her, exactly," said Gedge soothingly. "Her heart was in a very delicate state, and you say that you gave her a full meal? I shall send you a sleeping-draught, Mrs. Altamont, which you are to take, mind."

"Oh, I'll take it, I'll take it. I'd take poison if you were to give it to me! Do, now, doctor!"

"Don't be silly!"

"My life's over!"

"Just beginning perhaps!" he said, and fled.

IX

Mrs. Wormeley and Miss Simmons and young Master Albany stood at the door of Worksop House, expostulating with Mrs. Altamont's Georgie, who stoutly refused them entrance, though able and willing to inform them of the date fixed for Miss Altamont's funeral, and the place of burial.

"But why not see us?" whined Mrs. Wormeley. "And here's Master Albany's brought her some nice, white flowers."

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"She said I was to let no one go past this door."

"No one, but I'm not anybody, nor is Miss Simmons. We're her oldest friends."

Mrs. Altamont, in a blue gown, crossed the hall at that moment, and Mrs. Wormeley interposed her bulk knowingly between Georgie and the handle of the door.

"Oh, Betsey, there you are! *Don't* mind being seen in colours."

"I won't be seen at all."

"But Betsey, how can you bear it, all alone in the house with a corpse?"

"I'm not alone."

"A servant's nothing. Betsey, my husband read about you in the paper this morning. It said you were quite overcome when you got back from the inquest, prostrate were the words, and Mortimer kindly said at once, 'Go and look her up.'"

"That was that horrid reporter, Georgie," said Mrs. Altamont, turning to Georgie as if the two ladies were not there, "the one that got past you last night. Don't you let it happen again. . . . There's one coming now. Be quick!"

Georgie, thus admonished, executed a flank movement, adroitly dislodged Mrs. Wormeley, and shut the door in the faces of the two inquiring women, and a slim, pale, serious young man who had just crossed the road exactly in front of Worksop House.

"That's dod a reborter, I don'd bedieve!" ejaculated Miss Simmons, who had a bad cold, "Too smart looking!"

They turned away; Mrs. Wormeley had shopping to do and all her books to pay. The supposed reporter approached and spoke to them, with negligent deference.

"I beg your pardon, but was that Mrs. Altamont you were speaking to at the door just now?"

His address was just civil and just haughty enough to charm them.

"Yes," exclaimed Miss Simmons eagerly, struggling with her b's and d's, "and she won't see us, her best friends."

"She must be very busy," said he gently.

"Oh yes, naturally," said Mrs. Wormeley, walking along with him. "Her mother-in-law died—you know—on hearing what her son had done."

"The poor old dear had a weak heart!" volunteered Miss Simmons, across Mrs. Wormeley. How much farther did he mean to walk along with them? It was flattering. He asked Mrs. Wormeley, bending forward politely:

"And do you know when the old lady is to be buried?"

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"On Thursday, at a place called Charlton. The family have a grave there. We shall all go if we can."

"—If my cold is better?" put in Miss Simmons.

"Were you thinking of attending it, Mr.——?" Mrs. Wormeley hazarded.

The stranger stepped off the pavement at her side, suddenly.

"I may do so. Good day, madam, and thank you for your information."

He raised his hat and crossed over and a side-turning soon hid him from their view. They fancied they heard the snort of a motor in the direction in which he had gone, but decided it could not belong to one so unfurred and so commercial in style.

"I do believe he's a reporter after all," said Mrs. Wormeley.

"I am afraid so. Well, I'll nurse my cold, and go if I can, just to see who else goes."

"I'm quite well, but I'm not sure Morty will let me go when it comes to the point. He doesn't approve of women going to funerals, and you must admit it's rather backing up dear Miss Altamont, her irregular life and so on, to go to her funeral, now, isn't it?"

"It's about the last thing you can be asked to do for her, the last call, as you might say," said Evangeline. "Dr. Gedge says he will go if he has time, and any way he'll lend Betsey his carriage. But I don't for a moment suppose Agnes Gedge'll put herself out. She'll hate the carriage being lent, and she doesn't really care for Betsey."

"Jealous!" said Mrs. Wormeley. "I'll just run in here, dear, do you mind?—and pay Crump."

"I suppose," said Evangeline, managing, by a process carried to perfection by shopping women, to continue the conversation where it had left off when Mrs. Wormeley re-issued, beaming—Mr. Crump's pleasure at being paid, had communicated itself to her, "I suppose she considers that Betsey makes eyes at him."

"She does—make eyes, I mean—and at everybody. Most at men of course. It's the worst of being what they call a man's woman. She is that, don't you think?"

"Oh, distinctly."

"And do you notice that while one is reading up and discussing all those sort of things, about women like her especially, she knows it all, like the palm of her hand, or as Morty knows the procedure of the Stock Exchange? She is it. She's nothing to learn from books."

"Yes, she makes books—and I write her," said the novelist proudly.

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“Look what’s happened to her now! It’s very sad, of course, but one can’t imagine such a thing coming in any one of our lives!”

“Oh, I don’t know!” said Evangeline thoughtfully, “after all, what is it? A murder. Our husbands—I mean mine if I had one—might commit a murder?”

“Not they!” Mrs. Wormeley replied in the accents of contempt. “Don’t you see, we should never marry that kind of man, and he wouldn’t ever marry us. People like Betsey Altamont gravitate naturally to tragedy and *Sturm and Drang*, and the papers. She fell quite easily into the pitfall of marrying Altamont. We don’t even know if his name is really Altamont, nor does she? It was just his mother’s old stage name.”

“Delightfully all of a piece!” said Evangeline. “And the old woman must have had a life’s experience and a half! I envy Betsey having her to talk to all those years! I shall certainly go and support her—stick by her at Charlton if I am better. And so I don’t think I’ll go in here with you, Madge, it’s so draughty lounging round these vegetable baskets. I do think a green-grocer’s shop is the rawest place in the world! Good-bye, Albany, young man, what a dull time you’ve had, poor child! And he never saw his Betsey, did he, or had a chance to give her his flowers, had he? Give them to me, then, my pet, instead. You won’t? Isn’t it funny how he adores her, Madge?”

X

Thursday dawned, muddy and dank. The air was a wet medium, in which the motes of fog seemed to quiver and waver, encompassing the body in an ever-moving mist of shifting particles. It was not yellow, it seemed to contain a dull hint of ice and snow, rather than the offscouring of countless chimneys; and suggested Alpine heights more aptly than the neighbourhood of gibbering humanity.

Charlton, on the heights of Blackheath, seemed a long way off to all those who had promised themselves that they would accompany Miss Altamont on her last journey. Mr. Mortimer Wormeley’s faintly expressed prohibition was seized on as an excuse, ratified and self enforced by his, for the nonce, obedient wife. She had not seen Evangeline Simmons since Tuesday, but that young person’s cold was sure to be better, and her upspringing curiosity would act as a spur and surely drive her to see how Betsey behaved at Charlton.

Actually, Miss Simmons was in bed—unable now to sub-

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stitute d for b, unable to speak at all. Mrs. Gedge looked her up and pacified her by telling her that Dr. Gedge was taking the bit between his teeth and intending to drive Mrs. Altamont to Charlton in his carriage.

Mrs. Altamont voyaged alone. An urgent case called Dr. Gedge at the last moment and prevented his sharing his carriage with her. To his wife's intense annoyance, he did not take back his generous and unnecessary offer, but pursued his profession by the help of the District Railway. Betsey had got, and retained, his soft side.

She thought that on the whole she preferred to be alone, in this the first great sorrow of her life. She was glad that none of her so-called friends volunteered, though she felt she could have done with Georgie! The little maid-servant would have been the best possible company for a highly gregarious person in her condition. Georgie was merely a human being with a positive genius for holding her tongue. But some one had to stay at home to mind the house.

So Betsey sat alone in a corner of the compact little professional brougham, stupid with misery, half stunned by the continued impact of intolerable reminiscence, for more than an hour, till with a jerk, the carriage drew up.

The white fog settled round it, obliterating space, annihilating time. A man standing at a looming iron gate opened the door for her, let down the step, and she got out. The bulk of the carriage was wiped out at once, and it was Betsey's instinct, set down as she was in a cloud, to hang on to the only two solid objects she saw, the black gate and the black functionary who stood there.

She walked along. Presently, through the surging, uneasily shifting mist, she was aware of the box-like mortuary chapel of the cemetery, with its stern cupola, that hung, like a dishcover, exactly over the spot on the marble floor where Miss Altamont, in her coffin, was placed raised on an elevated pedestal. Some quiet person—she saw no one's features—escorted her to a pew, and handed her a little purple bound book of the service. This among other minor details of the arrangements, had, as Betsey found afterwards, been settled by Miss Altamont herself, months before.

She sat and stood all in order, looking up, spellbound, at the huge Frankenstein monster made of shining elm which held all that was left of her best beloved, the erring woman, the mother of a murderer, an accessory heroine like herself to the Perton *cause célèbre*. The coffin had cost forty pounds odd. Its gilt

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handles shone, its sides were planed with exactitude, the immense wooden structure looked for all the world like a brand new wardrobe at Maple's that Betsey had once coveted !

She shuddered. The organ was playing. How lucky it was that no one could guess her dreadful, grotesquely inappropriate thoughts ! Still she thought them, although she was so miserable. She even wondered if she had remembered to bring a second handkerchief, and if so, where was it ?

She heard a cough behind her—a cough she knew. It was that permanent affection, the curse of poor Mr. Downes, the little local lawyer who had drawn up Miss Altamont's will. He was there, then, neglecting his health in token of respect. She felt a rush of liking for him. What a bad day for him to come out ! She peered sideways through her veil, and ascertained that the little chapel was fairly full—of men. The Vicar of St. Faith's was there, and the butcher whom Miss Altamont had always "paid regular !" Betsey was pleased with them but disgusted with her class, and her own sex especially. Men were best after all. She thought she would never speak to the ladies of "The Pines" and "The Magnolias" and "The Beeches" again. Men were simpler, straighter, less fiddling. They had all respected Miss Altamont, a good tenant, a good client, a good customer, and they were here to prove it. Their stay-at-home, recalcitrant women, probably, took mean sartorial and health considerations into account. They had not been able to "fake up" becoming mourning in time, or fancied the damp would take their feathers out of curl ? Yet surely Evangeline, whose wardrobe she knew intimately, might easily have laid a temporary layer of black material over the blue strappings of her winter jacket, if she had been so inclined and have wrapped up her throat. She had not cared—none of them had cared. And Betsey had tried to amuse them in the old days—had let off expensive mental fireworks for them, had stood on her head, so to speak. She would take care never to amuse them again ! She would never even see them again !

Some one was speaking all this time, words that she knew by heart but could not hear. She had rather not hear them or be made to think of them ; they were words that she could not even read alone in the silence of her chamber without crying. And now that they were applied to the only thing she had ever loved on earth. . . !

She bit her lip, and stared up at the coffin, fixing her eyes on the single wreath that hung over on her side. The waxen white petals of the flowers focussed her tearless eyes. If she once

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allowed the salt rush to invade them, she would not be able to stop, and she knew that when the droning was over they would all go out for the further trial of the open grave. Tears were but a savage grace—she was not a crying woman. She had taken that anonymous wreath quite calmly, when it came last night, and Georgie had hatcheted the box open in the dining-room. It came from Brooks' in Regent Street, and no card was attached. It gave her no pleasure. She really disliked flowers associated with mourning. It vexed her to see them wither in the faint airs of a death chamber. But the sender's intentions must be carried out, and she had sent Georgie to lay the wreath reverently on the bed upstairs. The undertakers had been careful to forward it along with the coffin.

The short service was over. Betsey left her little purple book in the pew, and her handkerchief. With the slow circumscribed step of official mourning, the little party filed out of the chapel, towards the corner of the cemetery where the grave had been dug, and where three or four men in pale corduroys stood ready, spade in hand. Two of them held wide hempen bands. . .

She heard the swish of a motor, and its rapid arrest just by the gate. An individual in motor-disguise joined the troop. But Betsey, the only woman of the party, did not turn.

The coffin was lowered into the grave by means of those bands she had noticed. It was heavy. The quiet, solemn men in corduroys seemed to turn from mourners into rough, casual labourers, grunting and sweating at their ugly material task of putting some thing into the ground!

The words were spoken. Said out of doors, falling one by one from the tame officiating clergyman's mouth under his dripping moustache, and going off in smoke, they gave Betsey the same sensation of unreality that tea in Mrs. Wormeley's garden, and the flat clash of china cups in the open air, had been used to give. Then a few sods—grains of earth charily husbanded, were shed perfunctorily, as one scatters salt, on the coffin lying deep in the clay cavity, far below. . . they rattled. . .

"Earth to earth, dust to dust! . . ."

The solitary wreath of unknown provenance was lowered down on to the coffin. Betsey turned away in instinctive disgust. Those fair upstanding petals would be dashed, bent, overwhelmed, by a heavy, clayey burden. . . . It was as if she herself should be hurt! . . . Miss Altamont had never cared for flowers—at least, not for flowers cut and maimed, pilloried in a drawing-room! . . . It was a useless, tasteless ceremony, without true or noble significance.

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At the risk of being thought heartless, Betsey remained sullenly apart, as the other mourners looked their last at the wreath and the metal plate bearing the name *Julia Lane Adamson*. She was practically alone, standing with her eyes downcast, when the stranger in the motor garb, after a brief glance into the grave, detached himself from the group and approached her respectfully. She was inclined to run away and hide, she was for the moment, pure, suffering, unconscionable animal.

"Pray don't take me for a reporter," he said gently.

The soft thinnish voice attracted her. She turned, her eyes met his. She thought she had seen him before and liked him.

He went before the question that was shadowed by her inquiring eyes.

"I am here" he said, "to show my respect for Miss Altamont."

"Was it you who sent the wreath?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes. That's nothing. May I—?" The knot round the newly made grave began to scatter, and he spoke low and hastily. "Excuse me, but how are you going back?"

Betsey made no reply, but walked a little way in the direction of the gate of the cemetery. He took it as evidencing her weakness—a sort of faint feckless encouragement. But Betsey only wanted to get away from the condolences of the others.

Though she longed for them she did not think she could manage to bear them and keep her handkerchiefless calm. To his question, her answer, if any, should be the sight of her calling up her own carriage.

They reached the gate of the cemetery. Dr. Gedge's coachman, by some ocular marvel, sighted her, in the feathery mist which was lifting a little, and approaching, drew up by the kerb.

"Are you going alone?" asked the young man, at her elbow.

"I came alone."

"No woman with you?"

"There's no woman belonging to me—now!"

Her voice broke on the "now." He breathed a faint "Hush!" and cleverly propelled her away from the step of her own conveyance, a little further along, towards the big covered motor that stood behind it. It was large and seemed to effect a positive clearing in the fog, a displacement of the mist. He had not touched her . . . but she assented. . .

"Come, get in!" he said, still in the same gentle, even tones; and she obeyed him. He, she, and the motor, with its stolid chauffeur, seemed alone on a peak—in Blackheath.

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XI

She gave him no direction, nor did he ask her for any. The car started.

Presently she turned to him.

"I am in such sorrow that I am letting you do as you like with me. Who are you?"

"I am Ernest Rose Veere."

She looked blank behind her veil.

"Isn't the name at all familiar to you?"

"Oh yes," said she, without any sign of intelligence. She was worn out with sensation. He spoke to her as to a little child.

"Your maid shut the door in my face last Monday. Two women were there then. Why are not those two women here with you to-day? It's disgraceful."

"I did not want them," she answered earnestly. "I'm rather glad—I mean relieved—that they're not here." She thought, but was not within measurable distance of saying, that she found her present companion far more soothing. Then she gave her intelligence a jog. "But you were saying. . . that's why I came with you, I think—that you knew my mother-in-law and—liked her?"

"I did not have the advantage of knowing her personally, but I knew nothing but good of her. My—Sir Joris had the highest regard for her."

"He spoke of her?"

"Seldom. You understand. But kindly. He was a splendid fellow, a dear old man."

"Was!" Betsey murmured. "Oh, it is awful!" She shrank away back into her corner again.

"But we know—we all know—that the poor soul who's dead had no part in sending her son to murder my uncle!"

She sat bolt upright. "Oh, that is who you are! I must get out. Stop the car—oh, do stop the car!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind. There's no reason, is there, because you happen to be linked to the man who killed the uncle, that the nephew shouldn't be a friend to you. I mean to be. Won't you let me, Mrs. Altamont? I am quite harmless, not pushing. I didn't mean to intrude on your grief, only to show you that I shared it. Hang it all, I've lost a person dear to me too! Don't forget that. He was like a father to me. . ."

"Yes, oh yes, that's what I felt. You must hate the sight of my face!"

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"On the contrary," he said, "I long to see it. Won't you put your veil up? You chose to swear Scotch fashion the other day in court, so as to avoid raising your veil, and be snapshotted by the paper-men?"

"Yes, that was the reason."

"I thought it so fine of you. Lift it! Lift it, please."

She obediently raised the thick crêpe veil and flashed bleared, drowned eyes at him.

He did not think much of her. He said. "Thank you. Put it down again—the light hurts you, doesn't it?"

"I should think it did!" she added. "I have seen you before somewhere, haven't I?"

"I don't know. Where?"

"I know. At the launch of the *Elisabetta* at Hinderland. You found me a place next Wilfrid—that day. He was a reporter then."

"Then it was I, who——"

"Yes, you brought us together." She wept, copiously.

She felt this slim stranger to be like the brother she had never known. His off-hand tenderness, his blunt style, his queer lackadaisical way of taking an interest in her, fostered confidence, where delicate deferentiality, and half shades of politeness would have withered it. He talked to her as a fifth form boy might talk to a "fresher." Yet he admired her too, he had singled her out at Hinderland, because of her flashy hair, as she supposed. She looked a fright now, but the subtle sense of sex was there all the time with its flattering possibilities. Without it, a woman, a woman like Betsey Altamont, can never be entirely at her ease with a man.

So she gave way as in the presence of a comrade, her beauty and the uses of it tacitly in abeyance, and only the strange freemasonry that may exist between a pair of married lovers to excuse her physical lapse into the infirmity of tears. Her handkerchief proved ridiculously inadequate—she had left the supplementary one in the chapel. It was not long before she became aware of a hardy, capacious, man's sample of the useful square being thrust into her hand. She took it eagerly, and squeezed herself into the corner of the car, resisting an absurd and improper wish to lay her head on the neighbouring shoulder. The owner of it had, however, no notion of inviting her to do so. That was not in his methods.

His brow was knit, he was thinking out some plan.

The car stopped.

"Oh, where are we?"

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"At your home—so called." He did not stir.

"Will the chauffeur ring the bell?" she asked.

"Yes—or I will—" He got out and entered into conversation with his man.

As a result of it, no bell was rung. Mrs. Altamont had just uncrossed her knees and gathered her legs together preparatory to alighting, when he got in again, and the car went on. She looked mute interrogation.

"We are going to dine at The Albemarle together, quietly. Then I'll drive you back. Though I don't think you ought to be here, all night, alone. I wonder if Dobrée——"

She interrupted, fervently.

"No, really, I must not go with you. Please let me go home. I have things to see to!"

"No, you haven't. That's just the worst of it. Is there any one in the house?"

"There's Georgie."

"Who's Georgie? Oh, the servant! She's not company. You want to be taken out of yourself. I can do it, I think."

"Yes, but I——"

"My dear Mrs. Altamont, or Adamson, the die is cast, we are three miles away from your house already! I told him to get along. I'm exceeding the speed limit in this, as in everything else—our acquaintance, I mean. I'm not one to dawdle, I'm afraid, either in love or business. You're going to dine with me. Be easy. I'm quite dependable, you'll find! Haven't time to be anything else. Trust me, do!"

XII

The porter of the club evidently knew Veere well of old. An obsequious cloak room woman met Betsey beyond the baize curtain in the drawing-room, removed her jacket, poured out hot water for her and tendered hairpins. Betsey meekly washed her face and "did" her hair, and subtly regained a measure of self-respect. She began to be sorry she had given way so in the carriage, and allowed a man to see her cry. She had seen in his eyes when she foolishly raised her veil at his request, that he had not thought her much to look at.

The big black hat with the sweeping feather went on again over the gold meshes of her hair. The shadow of the brim hid to a certain extent those traces of the day's discomfiture that only time would remove, and it was a pretty, fundamentally healthy looking young woman who issued forth shyly to meet her host.

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Impassive, easy, as usual, he threw down his illustrated paper, and rose to escort her to the dining-room on the ground floor.

There, mild shaded lights, softly gliding waitresses, delicate meats and exhilarating wines reddened her lips, though they could not so soon bring back the colour to her bleached face, made paler by the showers of rice-powder she had nervously applied in a mere futile effort to relieve the stinging smart of tears. Her lips were scarlet, raw almost, with her unconscious biting of them. The blunted arrows of her eyes were pathetically inefficient. They refused to convey the mute, indeterminate appeal that, from habit, she was willing to throw into them. She sat opposite Veere and ate her dinner like a charity child.

Her simple, unobtrusive sorrow, the pleasure she evidently took in being petted, her innocent response to his sincerely meant kindness, touched the young man. He thought he had discovered a prize in this woman, with the serene lack of affectation, of vanity and self-consciousness. She would always get everything, for she asked nothing, except that you should be nice to her. Woman's arts, if she had any, and they were naturally in abeyance for the moment, would be instinctive instead of feigned. She was a straight flirt, if such a variety could be said to exist, charming, unexpected, different from Dobrée, and Lady Maude, and the others.

He promised himself not to lose sight of her. He would see what she was like when she was recovered and up to her normal form. Meanwhile he occupied himself with her physical well-being, in the style of the Good Samaritan befriending one fallen by the way.

She had gone, and must still go through a great deal. The situation was uncommon. He had helped to make it more so. Idly, from some inborn want of taste and reserve, actuated by curiosity, and a constitutional desire to get to the root of matters, he had followed up this trail. He had sought out the wife of his uncle's murderer, and attended the funeral of that uncle's pensioned mistress. With the modernest audacity he had brought Mrs. Altamont here, to a discreet West-End Club, and was giving her dinner. That she was presentable—more than presentable—was an accident and Veere's own luck. Outside on the pavement, beyond the flower-banked window, people were probably walking up and down, discussing her affairs and his. Newsboys were hawking papers containing full accounts of her felon husband's health, and assessing the probabilities of his ever being sufficiently recovered to stand his trial for an act which had placed him, Ernest Rose Veere, in his uncle's place, and made him heir to a vast property and a world-wide, well-established business.

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This and other sensational arrangements of fact passed through the young man's mind as he sat opposite Betsey Altamont, or Adamson, to be dismissed as soon as concocted and the pleasurable stimulus fairly derived from the antithesis. He studied her face keenly, but with diplomatic tact, lest he should annoy her in her present state of raw sensitiveness.

Betsey on the other hand did not focus him. He was little more to her than a minister to her present entertainment, her rescuer from the gloomy House of Death to which she must by-and-by return. She was acutely conscious of the physical delight of the warm club, of the good wine that soothed and bemused her a little, even of the footstool run in under the table to her numbed feet by a waitress. She was warm, now, for the first time since Miss Altamont had died. It brought it home to her how much and in how many ways she had suffered during the short space of five days—those five days dating from Mrs. Wormeley's afternoon "At Home," in which tragedy had come to her and she had, "lived" at last.

The young man opposite was talking about a certain Lady Dobrée De Saye, of whom she did not think she had ever heard. Lady Dobrée appeared to be a certain madwoman of fashion, who would be so much interested in her. Mr. Veere spoke of this lady as if he were engaged to her, without, however, precisely stating it as a fact. Betsey did not care. He was talking of Lady Dobrée now, propounding all sorts of wild-cat schemes in that low, even, colourless voice of his. Betsey thought he was the quietest, and at the same time the most dashing person she had ever met. He seemed made of quicksilver. He reminded her of some neat, polished tool of refined steel. His appearance, as he sat lightly on a chair opposite her, leaning forward on his elbows, was as different as possible from Wilfrid's dark, foreign, hairy, night-bird sort of looks. Wilfrid was handsome; this man was clean. Wilfrid had beautiful, terrible eyes; Mr. Veere's were small, cold, and inexpressive. His face, clean shaven, was not a face that one remembered; it was like that of many another young, well-trained, active Englishman. But his thin, rather cruel, mouth had, what Wilfrid's never could compass, a ravishing smile now and again, and then he showed, like Wilfrid, a set of regular, businesslike teeth, white and sharp. He was Wilfrid's cousin! Suddenly that fact came home to her! . . .

"Shall we go somewhere?" he said tentatively, when they had dined.

"Where?"

"Don't look so shocked! I am afraid I meant a music-hall.

THE WIFE OF ALTAMONT

It's what a man would do—in your case! Only I suppose a woman——”

“I don't think I want to go,” said she. “I'd go if I did. I understand what you mean. I didn't look shocked, only I can't quite control my muscles, they're stiff with crying. . . . Don't be angry, but I think I'd like to go home. I might sleep, perhaps, if I went now.”

He would have liked to take her in his arms, charmed by this halting confession of muscular incompetency. But he replied, coldly:

“Perhaps you might! One knows best what's good for oneself. We'll go.”

She walked upstairs and put on her jacket while he paid the bill. Having done so, he went out into the hall and found her standing there waiting for him as if she had known him all her life. He wrote the name of his guest in the book, as required by the management, inserting not the one he had known her by, but that of Adamson, the name he had seen on the coffin plate to-day.

His car was waiting at the door, uncovered.

“Do you mind?” he asked her. “I said we would have it so going back. I fancied a spin in the fresh air might do you good?”

Betsey assented gratefully. Henceforth her resistance to any little reasonable arrangement of his was over. She was in his hands.

Veere dismissed the chauffeur and drove himself. At the corner of Albemarle Street, he stopped the car and got out. Betsey did not look to see what shop he went into, she felt too tired to turn her head; it was not likely to be any concern of hers.

It was, however. Just before they reached Wimbledon, he pulled a sealed parcel out of his pocket.

“Look here, this is what I got out to get at the chemist's. Will you, to oblige me, take one of these?”

She swallowed it.

“How clever of you to take it without water! And another when you get into bed?”

She promised.

They came to Worksop House. He got out and rang the bell. He did not ask her for her latch-key, and it was as well, for that lay in the pocket of the jacket Altamont had perforce laid aside in St. Frithiof's Hospital.

Georgie, to whom it now appeared Veere had thought of telegraphing to sit up, opened the door, blinking but kindly

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welcoming. Veere with a sweet indeterminate smile that included Georgie, got into his car again and was gone.

"Oh, Ma'am," said Georgie, "I'm so glad you're back! I've been that lonesome, wondering where you'd got to!"

"Poor old Georgie, what a selfish pig I was to leave you all alone! I never thought——"

"Oh, Ma'am, it doesn't matter now that you've come back! Old Ginger's been sitting on my knee all the evening, purring fit to burst himself. He's wonderful company, he is."

"Take him to sleep with you, then," said Mrs. Altamont, wearily following Georgie and a candle upstairs. Georgie had taken that implement from her mistress's yielding hand with a "Let me, Mum, you'll spill the grease."

Mrs. Altamont began to undress, with Georgie's help. Mrs. Altamont would have liked to send her out of the room, but realised that the good simple soul could not bear to tear herself away from the newly recovered house-mate, who was her kind considerate mistress as well.

"Oh, my pill!" Mrs. Altamont exclaimed suddenly.

"What's that for, mum?"

"To make me sleep, I fancy. And I'm half asleep already. Good-night, Georgie. I say, sure you don't mind sleeping alone? Will Ginger really do?"

"Oh, yes, mum, Ginger's slept with me all these last nights; he purrs me off to sleep beautiful. Besides, I'm all right now that I've seen you home safe."

XIII

Mrs. Altamont did not know what drug it was that Ernest Veere had given her, but its effect was to make her sleep well into next day. Georgie thoughtfully did not call her. Very slowly and surely she woke to the acutest desolation.

The house seemed only truly empty, now that the body of Miss Altamont had been borne away. Until then, one room in it had held, not Miss Altamont, indeed, but A Thing, that having brooded over long and circled round in thought until one plucked up some sort of courage, one went in and looked upon. One posed the Eternal question: "Where are you?" and "What are you doing there?" to the sleeping Silence that lay, cold, imperturbable, framed in satin and laces, in its wooden shell. Then one kissed it to show that one was not afraid of the vasty Infinite, brought suddenly home to the finite creature and within wondering range of its humble vision.

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So now, Betsey dared not go near the kernel of horror, that one room, which she *knew* to be empty. She sat stiffly in the hall, with her eyes on the staircase that the coffin had been carried down the day before yesterday. She had been crouching in the dining-room, with the door ajar, while the undertaker's men accomplished their ugly mission. She had heard all, the grunting of the bearers, the strain of the bannisters, as the body of Miss Altamont in its wooden enclosure suffered this last indignity of grotesque, helpless transit. Dead and penned in her boarded case, she was forced vicariously to damage the house and fittings that, living, she had cherished. Betsey likewise knew each danger knob and awkward projection of the staircase with its three wide landings. She had heard, as she sat evilly spell-bound, the muttered exclamations of the labouring, sweating coffin bearers, "Mind the corner! Be careful there!" When it was over, when Miss Altamont had crossed her own threshold for the last time, feet foremost, the trembling woman had rushed out of the room to Georgie in the kitchen—smutty, blowsy Georgie, dealing gently with her pots and pans out of sympathy—and had flung her arms round the little handmaid's neck, regardless of the fact that there was a sheepish man hovering in the scullery.

"Georgie!" the mistress duly observed, when she had recovered herself, and Georgie's visitor had slipped away.

"Yes, I know, mum, I've told him so, and he won't take 'No' for an answer!"

"Told him what?"

"That you don't allow no followers."

"Don't I, Georgie? But you must marry some time, I suppose?"

"That's what he says, mum. He says 'Now, this minute,—' Oh, he's all right. But I say as I can't think of leaving you at present, mum, now can I?"

"Not just yet, Georgie; not till after——"

"And perhaps not then, mum; we'll see!"

Georgie no longer stood alone. Georgie had an interest apart, and in spite of her devotion to her mistress, looked beyond to the consolable future. This new tie of Georgie's accentuated Mrs. Altamont's isolation, and discounted the maid's sympathetic cookery and few ill-chosen words of comfort. The tactful mistress must take care to keep out of the kitchen henceforth. Georgie, of course, must have full liberty to see her young man, who was a grocer's assistant in Wimbledon, thoroughly respectable and ready to marry Georgie at once. It was all right; but it

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cut the mistress off from the maid, whose simple consolatory remarks had soothed her.

She was thrown back on the new friend whom she had so recently and so strangely acquired. He had said that he would look in some time in the day and see how she was. A little dubious about it last night, wondering if she had not given herself away too much, been too easy; to-day she was glad. And his thoughtfulness had benefited her already—the sleeping draught had carried her through a greater part of that dreadful first day after the funeral, when even people whom the fact of death has left more or less unaffected, feel depressed.

It was nearly five o'clock. She jumped to her feet, with a sudden feverish activity. She would go into the Death Chamber. She would unbolt the door of the ante-room, bolted since—! She would let herself straight into the tragic arena of two days ago. It was better over. There were papers in a bureau in the inner room, that were perhaps crying to be looked over?

It was done. She was there, standing free in terrible empty spaces, that had been cleared for the passage of the coffin. The low-ceiled rooms seemed vast and spacious. Georgie, good soul, had been in and had swept a little. She had spread a clean sheet over the bed. She had—North country, superstitious creature—veiled the looking-glass.

The window should be opened. The atmosphere was oppressive and close. Mrs. Altamont walked towards it and tried to raise the sash. It fell again. It would not keep up. The broken cord hung helplessly, and told her why. She had done it in that desperate effort to hinder the news from reaching Miss Altamont. She wedged it open with a chair. Then she looked round. The packet of patience cards so lately used were put out of sight; Georgie doubtless had thought them a profanity. Betsey stooped and tried to get hold of a couple of cards that had insinuated themselves behind the skirting board. One was a knave, the other that unofficial personage called the "Joker." Miss Altamont, had made it an ace of spades, in her bold actress-like handwriting. The unhinged Betsey felt it to be prophetic.

"A spade, to dig a grave." It was one of those last touches that break up enforced calm. Betsey sank down on a low prie-dieu chair in which she always had sat to read to Miss Altamont, and buried her face in her hands, so as not to see the dreadful room full of associations, while she thought of what she should do next—how she should get out of it, cut it, forget it.

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Buzz ! And Whirr ! The bells of St. Faith's, the church adjoining at the back, began to ring for afternoon service.

Betsey gathered her knees together to flee, outraged ; in a few moments more she adjusted herself to the familiar circumstance, and took pleasure in the clear fresh sound.

Soon the usual reverberation was set up. St. Faith's owned a fine peal. The air hummed with clean, sweet tones that cleaned and allured and uplifted. The process of revivification seemed to extend to her. Still the bells rang on. She took her hands away from her face, and drank in the gay noise. Some true comfort was instilled by this fanfaronade of cheer. It was no longer possible for her thought to wallow in the depths of bitterness. The cup had been drained, and she tossed up her throat, as a drinker may who has gulped down the lees of sorrow and is about to forget the sour taste of woe.

An end, and a beginning ! So Dr. Gedge had said—the last words spoken in this room in her hearing !

She would brood no more, she would go on, and walk bravely in the open fields of honest endeavour. Young, handsome, strong, she would eat, sleep, be herself. She would let the dear dead lie, while she, the quick, went about her decreed business of life. Life to be lived and savoured—life that she had not lived, yet.

All this the bells suggested to her, they even made her think of young Veere. His fair, blue, unruminating eyes, his well-cut, sharp, intaking nostrils, were akin to the inspiring hurtle of sound that vibrated now all through the air, for the peal had worked up to its due culmination and sonority. Soon it would drop into the dull summoning monotone. Though she was not in love with him, her mind was wholesomely occupied with the young man. She saw again his neat, straight black hair brushed smooth, his stiff collar, with its sharp curve that nursed his square chin. She heard again his clean unslurred brevity of speech, that spoke of an even go-aheadness and dashing efficiency that no lumber of old sad thought, lying derelict about the chambers of the brain, could tangle, distress or impede.

A somewhat different woman rose as the bells finally called to prayer, and looking up, but neither to the right nor the left, passed into the inner room, and lifted the flap of an old escritoire that stood near the fireplace.

She had forgotten to bring the keys—Miss Altamont's own sacred bunch now in her legatee's possession. She knew if she went back for them she would never return ; so, recklessly, she jogged and pulled at the brass knob of one drawer. It yielded, a little the worse for her attack.

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"She left all to me, so it doesn't matter," was her consolatory reflection.

The bells had stopped. She heard the burr of the organ faintly. She felt like a child in mischief—horribly perturbed.

There were some paper packets in the drawer, inscribed in Miss Altamont's handwriting.

"I am her sole executrix." So saying she opened the first. A sheaf of plain black-edged cards fell out and on them was neatly written :

"Mr. and Mrs. Altamont return thanks for kind inquiries and sympathy."

There were a dozen of them. For her and her husband. All in form—the best of form. On turning the packet over, she read, in pencil; "To save Betsey trouble after I am dead. N.B.—A round dozen will clear them all off!"

Another packet lying next to this strange piece of meticulousness engaged Betsey's attention.

It contained three smaller parcels, each inscribed, but so faintly that she had to carry them to the light.

"Wilfrid's Hair, ætat ten."

On the two other packets was written respectively :

"Wilfrid II. aged three," and *"Little Katie's hair."*

Confronted with these pendant examples of sentiment and cynicism, Betsey quailed, flung them down, and investigated no more.

The first was consistent enough with the character of the perpetrator, as she knew it; the lock of hair business was a revelation to her, and an unpleasant one.

Miss Altamont knew that she was a grandmother, then! Wilfrid must have brought her the locks of hair in some moment of expansion, Betsey being absent. Mother and son, at some period, must have had an explanation!

In Betsey's experience of the last five years, Miss Altamont and her son had not addressed more than three or four words to each other. They were practically not on speaking terms. Betsey, at Miss Altamont's desire, had been their interpreter and go-between.

So her darling had performed the manœuvre technically known as "going behind" her! Even Miss Altamont had been false—untrue to her supposedly beloved daughter-in-law.

The shock was tremendous. In the gathering dusk, Betsey,

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afraid no more, wept. She cried for rage—sheer blind rage. She was angry with them all. People were all alike! No one, not even a cynic like the woman that was dead could be trusted! This was almost her bitterest hour. An ideal friendship torn to ribbons, the intercourse of years honeycombed with suspicions! She had not known how like lovers she and Miss Altamont had been, till now, when one party to the alliance proved to have been double-hearted, and in treaty, if even for so short a time, with the enemy.

Veere was coming. If he proposed a music-hall, something heartless, something outrageous, she would go.

But he did not propose anything of the kind. He sat down, asked for some tea, and she showed him the contents of the envelope.

“Pathetic!” was what he said.

“Do you realise that’s the heir of Wilfrid’s illegitimate children that my mother-in-law has been hoarding for years?”

“I see. Those would be the children of Ada Cox, wouldn’t they, whose letter was read at the inquest? Poor soul!”

“Poor soul! Poor devil! She was the cause of your uncle’s murder.”

“Oh, indirectly! One can’t make her accessory before the fact. Quite an illiterate woman, I gathered. Had been a model, like everybody else. Well, why don’t you go and see her?”

“I?”

“Yes, you! You’ve got a kind heart, I believe and trust. And if you’re upset, what must she be?”

“She’s no right to be upset.”

“More right than you, for I daresay she loves the man. You don’t even pretend to.”

“I don’t pretend to because I don’t—didn’t. They are not my children. I never had any.”

“Dear thing! How sad! Well, these wretched children,—not yours, and so the more wretched, eh?—are probably starving, whose ever they are! That’s what’s occurred to me, do you know. Hearing that letter read in court, I’ve been worrying about them! Only you, yourself, made me forget.”

“Why don’t you go and relieve them, then?”

“I’d rather do it through you. It would be a graceful act if you were to look her up; if I went it would be an indecent one. Not really, of course, but in the eyes of the fools we can’t afford to affront all the time. Look here, do go, feed the children! I’ve got a special fibre of my being for them; it’s in my blood—you know they called my uncle the Children’s Friend.

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Do go to Mrs. Cox, and draw on me for supplies. I've got far too much money—he's left me everything and I'd already got some of my own—enough to live on. I shall be getting soft if I don't take care to send myself bankrupt or something stimulating of that kind!"

"I wish you wouldn't say that!"

"Superstitious, Mrs. Altamont? Not you! Well, will you come and dine with me somewhere quietly,—say Richmond, this time? We'd better not patronise the Albemarle twice running! Tie yourself up tight, if you don't mind. The car's open. Or—I say, would you honour me by wearing this?"

She now saw that he had brought a cardboard box with him and that it was lying on the table. She opened it; it held a smart black motor bonnet that fitted close to the head, with a veil attached.

"I got it at Woolland's. That's where Dobrée goes, and she says it's the best place—in fact, she chose it. I hope it is what you like?" he said anxiously.

"I haven't got such a thing in all my wardrobe. You see, I never seemed likely to be going in a motor-car at all," Betsey said gratefully. "Of course, I'll wear it; it's beautiful."

He smiled with pleasure as she ran upstairs to adjust it. He had introduced another woman's name as a test. Some women, he knew, would have raised objections to a hat thus obtrusively god-mothered by a more intimate female friend of the donor's, but Betsey was not like that, he was glad to observe, and he had not expected her to be.

He brought her back to Worksop House. As they drew up a smart young man in a bowler hat was coming away.

"Who's that?" he asked, sharply.

"Georgie's young man. Did you think it was a friend of mine?"

"Tidy young chap enough!" he replied. "Looks as smart as I do. But I didn't ask. It isn't my business to look after you and make inquiries about the character of your admirers. You wouldn't stand it from me."

His tone was wistful. Betsey tried to please him.

"Oh, I don't know," she said gently. "I am going to call upon Mrs. Cox, to-morrow, as you asked me to. Good-night, and thank you."

"I can't come to-morrow," said he. "I'm dining out—with Dobrée and her pal, as a matter of fact. But I'll come the next day and hear about your excursion. Shall I send the car for you as I can't come myself?"

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"No, it might frighten Ada and make her think I was giving myself airs. And I don't expect you to be so kind as to come every day," she said.

"Oh, kind—!" he said. "I began it out of kindness, but I'm going on with it for myself, if you'll let me?—"

XIV

The monstrous twin-eyed "tram" carried Betsey next day over solitary suburban heights, and lampset crowded dales, over Denmark Hill with its mouldering gardens and wooden palings, Camberwell Grove, and over the hill again down into Lordship Lane. There she got out, asked many questions, and was directed to Burckhardt's Grove.

It was nearly dusk, and cold and damp. She wore a black fur jacket that had fitted Miss Altamont closely in the days when Miss Altamont had walked abroad. It draped the slighter Betsey handsomely. It was brown at the seams, particularly under the arms. It would not stultify Ada by its magnificence, but it enhanced Betsey's beauty with its rich darkness, so that whenever she asked the way, the questioned one, after giving his information, turned and looked at her.

She had taken no money from Veere, and she had brought very little of her own. She meant to prospect first. She could not bring herself to believe that a minx like Mrs. Cox could be in the straits she had described in her sensational letter to Wilfrid, a letter written, of course, to stimulate him to renewed efforts to increase their exchequer. If she and her children were indeed as destitute as she made out, if Little Katie was growing up maimed and stunted for want of food, then—Miss Altamont's last wish to help her to grow should be respected. Only, where was the money to come from? Immediate housekeeping needs had absorbed nearly all the available funds in the house. Veere, during these last days, had practically boarded her free.

It would be some time before she could inherit. There was no reason, now, why she should refuse her legacy. Wilfrid, if he lived, would be fed and housed by the State, and Wilfrid would be hanged!

It revolted her that Veere should gratify his strong sense of antithesis under the guise of charity. The mistress of the man who had murdered a beloved uncle should not correctly be relieved by his nephew, though it would be picturesque. It was only slightly less picturesque that Ada should be succoured by her lover's mother, but Betsey felt it would be in better taste.

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She hoped with all her heart that Ada would prove an impostor?

Number ten Burckhardt's Grove. Betsey found it. Her heart beat.

Burckhardt's Grove was a blind alley, a byway, a section, seemingly, of some steaming African swamp left standing uncleared in the midst of civilisation. Trees, bushes, and low craven houses together, were hideously entangled, a lodge of boughs like Nicolette's would have been drier. Surely no landlord could want to turn a tenant out of this dripping reservoir of disease? Were all the tenants of Burckhardt's Grove as hard up as Mrs. Cox? For at no window of all the dozen houses did light show, no sound came to Betsey's ears except the crunch of her own footfall on the gravel, and the soft, pertinacious swish of rain, intercepted by foliage, that passed it on, in drips, to the sodden earth of the little scrubby cat-runs round each house.

Betsey counted the numbers down from the last she could see by the light of the street lamp at the corner, pulled and rang—a silly tinkling cheerful bell that made her jump. The house had only one storey. The sill of the upper window nearly met her tall feather.

A woman opened the door.

She was pale, thin and tall, with all the strange, blasted beauty of anæmia and consumption. To Betsey's Philistine eyes she was hideous. There was not an ounce of colour in the face shadowed by crisped black hair. Her white chapped upper lip was short and beautifully sucked in, like a mouth in a Pre-Raphaelite picture. This, Ada the minx—this piteous, wild, and faded Belle Dame Sans Merci!

"Mrs. Cox?"

The woman nodded.

"I am Mrs. Altamont . . . Shall I go?"

"Stay if you like!" returned the other, in a strong Cockney accent. She turned and led the way into a room on the right side of the door. There was no light in the passage except what pierced, through the dirty, decayed fanlight, from the street lamp further down. In the room there was a lamp standing on a packing case. There was a chair, and two more packing cases. That was all.

"Sit down," said Mrs. Cox, pulling up the one chair to the box that supported the lamp. "Sit down. It's fairly clean; you won't take nothing away with you."

"Where are the children?"

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"In the bed, to keep warm. I'll fetch them down for you presently. Sit down."

Mrs. Altamont complied. She felt sick. This horrible, barren emptiness! Mrs. Cox grown cool and hardy in proportion to her visitor's dereliction, stood near the door, her arm, bare to the elbow, languidly propped up against the lintel.

"You've come to have a good look at me, haven't you? Well, I'm not much to look at. I was just doing a bit of washing when you called."

"You look awfully tired?"

"Dearie, what would you have? I'm wore out, that's what I am, with trying to keep a rag on the children's backs, and a bit in their stomachs. It was hard enough when he was here and gave me ten bob a week."

"Was that what he gave you?"

"Yes, and sometimes a little more. How much did he give you?"

"He never gave me anything. I lived with his mother. I looked after her."

"Did you 'ave help?"

"Yes, a girl."

"And no children? I don't know, for Wilfrid wouldn't never talk to me about you."

"No, no children."

"Wanted them badly, I suppose?"

"Yes, at first."

"That's always the way. Them as wants them can't get 'em, and them as thinks them a nuisance has more than they want."

"You hardly look strong enough——"

"No more I am. But when I had Little Katie I was a strong healthy girl enough. Used to sit for the figure. But children soon spoils that. Would you like to see 'em now? I expect that's what you came for, more than to see me?"

"I came——" began Betsey. "Yes, I should like to see them, please."

Mrs. Cox disappeared. Betsey had acceded to her request, so as not to seem unkind, though it was the mother who interested her most. The woman's thin civility, her indifferent politeness, put her at her ease. A termagant would have revolted her, a whiner disgusted her. The picture that Ada managed to present touched her. That thin angular drudge had "sat for the figure" before she came into Wilfrid's hands, and bore his children for him!

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Mrs. Cox returned, carrying a tousled black-haired boy. A very small girl trotted behind. The boy was the bigger of the two. She was dressed in a kind of petticoat waist, the boy was in a flannelette nightgown.

"Here they are! Sleepy, poor souls! She's the eldest, but she ain't growed like he has. Wretched wizen little thing she is—ain't you, Katie?"

"*Not enough to eat—I couldn't grow . . . not enough—to—eat!*"

Like a refrain—like the rain drips from the eaves, punctuating the minutes, outside, these words chanted themselves in the back of Betsey's mind. She held out her hand to the little girl, awkwardly, stupidly, as a childless woman does.

"I keep 'em clean. You can kiss 'em if you want. But perhaps you'd rather not, considering——"

"I don't mind at all," said Mrs. Altamont gently, stooping to Little Katie, and then raising her lips to those of the boy who was held down to her. It was true, they were, and smelt, clean enough. She was moreover anxious to remove the misconception that evidently existed in the mind of Ada Cox. The sight of the children of the man she hated gave her only neutral sensations; they were neither attractive nor repulsive to her.

Mrs. Cox watched Mrs. Altamont—observed her favourably. She made up her mind about her, as an animal does. She let herself go; she trusted Betsey on her face. She ceased to use her remarkable powers of self-control, and the slow drops began to course down her cheeks, those worn channels for miry scalding tears. She still held the big child mechanically . . .

"Ah, don't cry, please don't!" the other woman pleaded, taking the child from her, and nursing him. Mrs. Cox, relieved of her burden, made use of her apron, and held it over her face. The word "Fatherless!" issued from its folds.

"You are *not* to cry for Wilfrid," cried Betsey. "Believe me, he's not worth it. He's selfish, thoughtless, cruel. I've always known it. You're too good for him. I'm too good for him; he ought never to have been born, he's only done harm in the world, and most to himself.

"That's what I feel," said Ada. "Poor boy! He's never had a chance."

Her expressions of tenderness aroused the neglected wife.

"Yes, he had! I'd have been a good wife to him if he'd let me. You *were* a good wife to him—" She stopped. "No. Yes—I mean it. And when he's gone, you'll be his real widow." She rose, put the boy down, and patted Ada on the back. The

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woman's sobs jerked once or twice, and ceased. She looked up inquiringly.

"Didn't you never love him yourself?" she asked.

"No. Or else I wouldn't have been able to come and see you."

"You might have done that for spite," said Mrs. Cox, "just to see the woman he liked better than you."

Betsey was not deterred by this raw statement of fact.

"Look here," she said, "let's not talk of Wilfrid. . . . He's done—finished! I'll try not to abuse him to you, for you feel it, of course. Be practical. I am. How do you go on? Mcney, I mean?"

"I have none. We're to be turned out day after to-morrow. Rent was paid beforehand——"

"Poor Wilfrid!" said Betsey. "Then, where do you go?"

"What's the use of going anywhere when you ain't got a penny to pay your rent? You go where they'll take you. . . . It's the House, I suppose. River for me, if Wilfrid don't get off!"

"Hush, hush! He won't get off. And if he does, it's prison—quod you call it—for life. I've had it all explained to me. But—let me see—the public'll be getting up a subscription——"

"For you, not for me. You're his lawful wife, aren't you?"

"Ah, don't be snappy with me! I'm trying to think of a plan. I've got enough to live on, and keep one servant. . . . My mother-in-law left her money to me. . . ."

"Knew how to get the right side of her, I expect."

Betsey asked, disregarding, "Ada, can you cook?"

"Yes. And then?"

"Because if you'll come along with the children and live with me, for the present any way, and do the cooking for us all, I'll send away *my* girl. She wants to go away and get married, so it works out all right. And I'll give you her wages, so you'll feel independent. Then we'll try to get along together and bring up the children. Poor girl! I do so like to see you smile!"

"Little Katie never did get quite enough, the doctor said," murmured Mrs. Cox. Her face was indeed irradiated.

"I can pack you all in nicely," repeated Betsey cheerfully, conning the resources of the house accommodation in her mind. "Let me see, I can sleep in Miss Altamont's room and you in mine—and the children in the little room between."

Ada made an inarticulate sound. If anything, it suggested

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disapprobation, but Mrs. Altamont chose to take it the other way.

“ For God’s sake, don’t thank me ! ”

“ I wasn’t agoing to, azackly,” said Mrs. Cox. “ You say you do want a servant. It’s very good of you to take me with the burdensome children too, but I’ll give you good value for your money, and, of course, I shan’t take your wages, and I can cook. I learned off my mother, who was a wonderful clever woman. I know how to make folk comfortable. I made him comfortable, and now I’ll do for you—till he comes back.”

“ Gracious me, it’s nearly seven ! ” Betsey, in whom nervous tension was giving rise to headache, suddenly exclaimed. She felt as if she must at once get out of this place, this environment which had so subtly instilled into her mind the idea which was perhaps going to turn out a hideous mistake. She must think, instead of feeling. While she was under Mrs. Cox’s roof, however, she continued to respond to the same sentimental stimulus.

“ I will come to-morrow and fetch you all ? Midday ? Is that too soon ? I have to settle my Georgie, you see ? She can stay a day or two, or go at once, which I like.”

“ I can take up the place at once,” said Mrs. Cox, sturdily.

“ Very well, then,” Mrs. Altamont replied, fussy and kind. “ And you’ll have the children dressed ready, won’t you ? Have you much to go on with—in the eating line, I mean ? ”

“ Not much,” said the other. “ Nothing, in fact ! But we can do.”

Betsey laid five shillings odd on the table. “ All I’ve got—keeping enough for my fare back,” she said. “ It’ll perhaps get supper, and some breakfast. *Good-bye !* ”

Mrs. Cox did not even reply to Betsey’s perfunctory adieu. She looked mazed.

(To be continued)

THE MONTH

EDITORIAL : *THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE—Women's Suffrage,
The Circulating Libraries, The Drama, Fine Arts, etc.; Social
Parasitism, by J. A. HOBSON; The Contending
Forces, by L. T. HOBHOUSE; Review,
by R. A. SCOTT JAMES*

THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE—THE CIRCULATING LIBRARIES—
THE DRAMA—FINE ARTS, ETC.

COULD anything be more depressing than the present state of public affairs? Here we have the two great parties of the State—the two great parties with great traditions and with great records. They represent the governing classes of the mightiest, of the wealthiest and even of the oldest civil organisation that the western world has yet seen. They have been at work for so many centuries these two parties and where do they stand? On the very lowest rung of the ladder! They have contrived between them to cause to arise a class war of the most sordid kind—a class war simply and solely for money. On the one side there is little or no talk of liberty or of any of the higher things, on the other there is no talk at all of the old traditions or of the finer things. And from both sides come perpetual cries of “Grab.”

AT any time a class war is the most depressing of things: at the present day, when we consider how many of our fathers have struggled, toiled and died to evolve the modern State, it is more than ever depressing. And, although there is no apportioning the responsibility to any particular party or to any particular class, it is certain that the odious features of the contest have been introduced by the periodical Press. Perhaps the cheaper Conservative Press is responsible for turning what might have been a merely domestic discussion as to who should bear the increased burden of insane competitive armaments—perhaps it is the cheaper Conservative Press that has turned this merely domestic discussion into a national struggle. The methods of the Conservative Party have, perhaps, always had as much or as little to be said for them as those of the Liberals, but they have almost always been voiced in a lamentably inefficient manner. The Conservatives of to-day are no more Tories than the Liberals are Whigs. They are the Opportunists “out” just

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as the Liberals are the Opportunists "in." About neither party is there a breath of principle or a sign that either has any real comprehension of its traditional significance. The only tradition of the Tories to which the present Conservatives adhere is that in its Press and public campaigns the Tory party has always been the stupid party. The only tradition of the Whigs that has devolved upon the present-day Liberals is that of an efficient obscurantism—the tradition of committing, in secret, acts of cold oppression, all reports of which are carefully stifled in their party Press. For in their relations with the Press the Whigs have always been singularly skilful.

THE distasteful condition of public affairs as far as they are before the public is probably due, as we have seen, to the lower Conservative Press which has got out of hand. This organism has swept off its legs those few really Tory leaders of a dismally vulgar Conservative party—those few Tory leaders who have the political instinct at all developed. For the concealed conditions which obtain in India and in our prisons at home the Whig "ins" are solely responsible. Of these last, the party Press gives us no inkling at all. The Liberal party Press is obscure, spiteful and impotent to the last degree. By its persistence in the misrepresentation of fact—to which we shall return—it has lost its best, for it has lost its most chivalrous writers. The lower Conservative Press, on the other hand, is all-devouring, is all present. It seems to taint the food we eat; it seems to render miasmatic the air we breathe. It is more vulgar than the vulgarest of demagogues; it is more mendacious than the most irresponsible of speakers at a street corner. Yet this lower Press has taken in hand, has controlled, for the first time, the entire fortunes of the Conservative party. It is no secret that the Conservative party leaders know that if they had been in power to-day or if they were to come into power to-morrow, they must introduce almost exactly Mr. Lloyd George's Budget. They must, that is to say, impose a greater burden of taxation upon the rich; they must lighten the burdens of the poor. They recognise perfectly well that Mr. Lloyd George's taxes on the unearned profits of land were perfectly reasonable and perfectly equitable, just as all taxes upon pure speculation are for the good of the State. And indeed, mere party prudence let them see that to put their hands in their pockets and to take out the ridiculously small sum that the land taxes amounted to would have appeared—nay, would have been

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—patriotic, responsible, and statesmanlike. But the lower Conservative party Press, intent upon scares and upon that mendacity by which, from day to day, it maintains its intolerable circulations—the lower party Press insisted upon introducing into the struggle the cat-call of Socialism. Yet Socialism is dead as far as its ideals are concerned, and the practical Socialists of to-day are Economists set on solving certain financial riddles. The chief of these riddles has for its solution the more equal distribution of wealth. The chief of the riddles of thinking men of all parties and all classes has for its solution precisely the same object. As campaigning tactics the leaders of the Conservative party would have passed the land taxes and the motor taxes and such other taxes as pressed heavily upon non-productive speculators. They would have devoted the whole of their opposition, the whole of their attention to the licensing clauses of the Budget. They would then have been acting upon the strongest ground. They would then have been consenting to taxation which they themselves must inevitably impose as soon as they come into power. But their lower Press, with its intolerable yelping about a Socialism which no longer exists, about despoliating and about disloyalty, have forced the Conservative party and have forced the House of Lords into taking their stand upon the weakest ground that they can possibly occupy. The more thinking members of the House of Lords had not, at the beginning of the campaign, the remotest desire to throw out the Budget or to render vocal their more imbecile members. But under pressure from outside they have taken both of these disastrous courses; they have rejected financial enactments that were absolutely necessary, they have permitted their most irresponsible members to utter columns upon columns of school-boy politics, such as put absolutely into the shade the most irresponsible, the most plebeian of the platform speeches of the other side. The Conservative party, in fact, has lost all claim to respect, has jeopardised entirely its existence for many years to come.

YET if we consider several actions of the Liberals—several actions by which they have sinned against their traditions of liberty and of liberality, of freedom of speech, and of readiness to consider new thought we are faced with a state of things which must make us rub our eyes did we not remember what a cold thing was the Whigism of the past. It is not a question, for instance, of the expediency of British rule in India. But it

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becomes a question of the essential qualities of Liberal tradition when we consider that the Liberal Press almost entirely suppresses the material facts of Lord Morley's government of that Empire. In the Liberal papers you will read that such and such a native has been deported for uttering seditious opinions. And the good Liberal comforts himself with the idea that deportation is negligible, is almost a pleasant thing. It will, he imagines, give some poverty-stricken agitator a change of air—a change of air that will reduce him to such a frame of mind that he will pour blessings upon the author of the *Lives of Cromwell*, of *Diderot* and of the late Mr. Gladstone. Actually the deportations have been in thousands: respectable elderly natives, the preachers of widely varying creeds, men of blameless lives, the merest theorists, have been deported for uttering perfectly pious opinions. It is very much as if Dr. Clifford, Archbishop Bourne and, let us say, the head of the Christian Scientists in London should have been deported to the Klondyke for saying that the present Government has done comparatively little for Non-conformists, for Roman Catholics and for the church of Christ Scientist. All this the Liberal Press has carefully lost hold of and all the while it has carefully emphasised the pleasant word deportation. Moreover, it has been forced to emphasise the outrages, the bomb-throwings, the assassinations.

DEPORTATIONS! The comfortable Liberal imagines two or three happy agitators seated beneath the palm-trees, eating rare fruits in a climate cool and more salubrious than that of their own provinces. Actually there have been many hundreds of deportations and these men are common prisoners in common gaols. The Russian Government exports its political opponents to Siberia where they stifle, starve or freeze, at any rate in some measure of liberty. And the Liberal Press tears out its hair, sits in sackcloth and ashes and howls to the British Government to intervene in the sacred names of Gladstone, Morley, Bright and Cobden. It has been reserved for Lord Morley to deport those who differ from him—into common gaols. It is not a question of whether these acts are necessary for British rule in India; it is not a question of whether British rule is beneficial to India—but it *is* a question of Liberal traditions that these acts take place in secret.

It has been reserved for Mr. Gladstone—oh, sacred name, whose echoes bear in their skirts gracious and fluttering whispers

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of the word "Liberty!"—it has been reserved for Mr. Gladstone to cause the maltreatment of women in our own gaols. Well has it been said to him at a public meeting: "*Patrem habes, eum exorna.*" Upon a certain day many years ago the late Mr. Gladstone and the late Mr. Morley—for Mr. Morley does not sleep, but is dead—uttered very memorable words in the House of Commons when he said that the Conservative Government, by forcing Mr. William O'Brien, a political prisoner, to put on gaol breeches, were humiliating not only themselves but a great nation. Oh, sacred names of Gladstone and Morley, in the name of one of you, political prisoners are deported into gaols; in the name of the other, women are forced into the costumes set aside for the use of murderesses, thieves and harlots (costumes previously worn by all such criminals have actually been forced on to the limbs of women political prisoners). The Liberal Press does not call attention to this matter. In one of His Majesty's gaols, the doctor officiating at the forcible feeding of one of the women caught her by the hair of the head and held her down upon a bed whilst he inserted—in between her teeth that, avowedly, he might cause her more pain—the gag that should hold her mouth open, and there was forced down her throat one quart of a mixture of raw oatmeal and water. In the barbarous and never to be sufficiently reprehended Middle Ages this punishment was known as the *peine forte et dure*. Liberal newspapers have not, so far as we have been able to discover, claimed yet for Mr. Gladstone the honour of this splendid revival. No platforms that we know of have rung with the splendour of this achievement, the fame of Mr. Gladstone's assistant, the chief doctor of the gaol, has not been trumpeted abroad, nor have we yet seen it stated that he shall sit with Cobden and Bright and Mill in the seats of the just. No, the Liberal Press has made no mention of these glories. There are several Liberal daily papers in London, all save one of which may be had for the modest sum of one halfpenny. One of these we are unable to read, so sick does its efficient and sensational reports of all murder cases in the United Kingdom and of every suicide render us. The other of these has recently lost its three most attractive writers, disgusted by its policy with regard to the actions and aspirations of women who desire the Suffrage. With regard to another the following story has been told us by one of its staff:

He was, our informant, with the official reporter of the paper present at one of the attempts of the women to break into the House of Commons. A woman fainted and was brought

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within the police lines. Restoratives were administered and after a time the woman was permitted to depart. The reporter of the paper recounted these facts faithfully. He added, however, the trifling adornment that when she came to, this woman spat in the face of the policeman who was bending over her. This adornment was added to a plain tale in order to give the public of the paper what it wanted. Our informant, however, being unreasonably filled with the idea that the truth should occasionally be spoken even by the paper upon whose staff he was, wrote to the editor objecting to this playful embroidery of an otherwise uninteresting fact. The paper took no notice of his letter, whereupon our informant—outrageous as are all supporters of the Suffrage Movement—wrote his account of the occurrence for another paper. He had, we are assured, a very bad time of it with his own journal. And thus is the efficiency of Liberal journalism maintained. Again, in the case of what is called the “Polling Booth Outrage,” a certain quantity of an innocuous fluid called pyrogallic acid splashed into the eye of an official in the polling booth. This gentleman was already panic-stricken at the idea sedulously circulated by Ministerial organs that the “women were going to use vitriol.” He rushed, therefore to a bottle, containing a remedy for burns caused by sulphuric acid. This remedy happened to be liquid ammonia and this liquid ammonia the gentleman poured into his eye. The resulting irritation the Liberal journals liberally and sedulously chronicled. The cause they discreetly suppressed.

THAT these methods of reporting should also be adopted by the Tory gutter Press might be expected and, considering the point of view that is to be awaited from them, it might be condoned. For the matter of that it is nothing more than human nature that the Liberals should have adopted these methods. Their party leaders—and more particularly Mr. Asquith, Mr. Gladstone and, in the case of India, Viscount Morley—their party leaders have so stultified all the Liberal traditions of humanitarianism that they have laid themselves open to the most galling of attacks. And the spectacle of a Liberal Cabinet Minister paling and flushing upon a public platform at the mere whisper of the words “Votes for Women”—the spectacle of such a Minister quivering in his nerves and lacerated in his conscience is sufficient and more than sufficient to raise feelings of angry commiseration in the very decent gentlemen who are Liberal journalists. For it is perfectly safe to say that almost

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every individual Liberal journalist is a pleasant, a humane and an upright man. And it is only a symptom of how damaging to the soul it is to become a public Pander—to seek perpetually to give the public what it wants on the one hand, and to give it what the party desires that it should give them on the other hand, that the party Press should achieve, should perfect this policy of suppression and of mendacity.

THE fact is that, by perpetually hiding its head in the sand, the ostrich called the Liberal party has managed to hide from itself the fact that there exists among women any serious desire for the franchise. Writing at times in haste we have done a little injustice to the older advocates of Votes for Women. It is perfectly true that before the historic interruption of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman at the Albert Hall, the idea of woman as a franchisable animal was entirely a matter of pious opinion. It is equally true that militant methods have, in the few years succeeding that episode, raised the question of woman's franchise to the position of an immediate—of the only immediate and pressing—social necessity. The Suffragettes have done this. But it is certain that by almost ten times as many years of drawing-room lectures and of private persuasion the older Suffragists have done a great deal to prepare the way. And indeed even Mr. Asquith has been moved to the extent of having a letter lithographed as to its body and comparatively courteous as to its spirit—to having such a letter prepared and forwarded to the immense number of ladies who write to him daily to insist that they demand their rights. Whether these letters will succeed in convincing the Prime Minister that they do demand their rights we can hardly say. Mr. Asquith, as we have already pointed out, has the mind of a lawyer and the methods of a cross-examining barrister. He is entirely out of touch with the people : he has no means of ascertaining what are the popular demands or what are the popular necessities. He goes, in fact, round and round in a narrow circle of doctrinaire preconceptions. But whilst thus the Prime Minister behaves like a squirrel in a cage, his two leading henchmen, Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George, have already permitted upon public platforms symptoms to appear of how in private their apprehensions are aroused. Thus Mr. Churchill has already stated that nothing would please him better than to answer the questions of women at the end of his meetings. With a little more persistence the women will force him to say that he will be ready to answer

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their questions in the very beginning and forefront of his meetings. For this question should be in the forefront of all questions.

MR. CHURCHILL and those few of his colleagues who are sincere in what are called advanced ideas may, with some reason, allege and may possibly believe that there are other public matters more urgent than this of the right of women to share in the government of themselves. But however urgent the necessity for the legislation which Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George desire—that very urgency makes the necessities of the women by ten times the more urgent. For the reforms that Mr. Lloyd George and his friends desire are precisely social reforms and social reforms precisely concern women even more than men. Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues desire the country to put into their hands a power more tremendous than has been wielded by any oligarchy that England has yet known—a power more tremendous because more efficient. They are asking to be made the bureaucratic autocrats of an all-powerful Single Chamber. This may be right: this may be wrong: this may be for the good of the people or it may prove the people's bane. But there can be no doubting that in making these demands Mr. Lloyd George and his friends are asking to be allowed to become the autocratic rulers of the immense body of voiceless and voteless women. As far as the men of the country are concerned the Cabinet will be at least nominally popularly elected. For women they will be mere tyrants.

LET us again repeat that the reforms which Mr. Lloyd George will enact at the moment when he is returned to power are reforms purely social. Social reforms affect the home. The spectacle of six hundred odd male legislators gravely debating—as they did during the present Parliament—upon whether pink flannelette or white made the best night-wear for children and gravely passing a law that no mother should sleep in the same bed with her child—this spectacle of manly grandmotherliness would have been touching, would have been laughable, would have been grotesque in the extreme if it had not been so intrinsically scandalous. Again, a Royal Commission is inquiring into the working of the marriage laws. And the purpose of a Royal Commission is, as a rule, to modify or altogether to alter existing statutes. Sanitary enactments become

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more and more frequent and enactments dealing with the sale of foods. And such measures form the large bulk of those that are nowadays passed by Parliament. So that this is the psychological moment for the entrance of women into public life. For such measures influencing as they do the lives of women far more than the lives of men and occupying as they do the interests of women far more than those of men—such measures are the real revolution that is taking place within our boundaries. And even if there were no other measures of importance before the country, women who demand the vote would be justified in impeding by whatever means they have in their power the passing of any Parliamentary measures whatever until the Suffrage is granted to them. For, supposing that the Liberal Government succeed in their avowed intention to abolish the House of Peers either they will establish in its place a subservient Senate or they will proceed to govern alone. No worse fate could overtake the women of the country.

It is a thousand pities that at this juncture there should be division in the ranks and in the policies of the supporters of the movement. For such a juncture as the present is not very likely to occur again. As far as we can tell the two great political parties are very evenly balanced and a united attack upon one party or the other must weigh very heavily. As to what the Conservatives might do if they returned to power we can tell very little, but we know very well that they could not possibly act with a malevolence more active or with a resistance more stubborn or with a greater meanness of petty misrepresentation than has been exhibited by the present Government. The Women's Social and Political Union seems therefore to have adopted the right course when it proposes bitterly and at the last gasp to hinder the return of the present Government to power. Mr. Asquith has refused with the one hand to take any measures at all to confer the franchise on women and, whilst doing this, he has promised to promote adult franchise which would confer the suffrage upon women. When he has been in the refusing frame of mind he has been woodenly strong, he has been leadenly heavy. When he was in the promising vein he has shuffled perpetually. And his proclamation of the Government policy after the Dissolution has contained only the most shadowy reference to adult suffrage. This makes very plain the utmost that is to be expected from him. There will be no concessions and when promises are made there will be no

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performance. The imprisonments will continue, and there will continue, too, the outrages within the prisons : the party Press will continue its misrepresentations and its suppressions, the party itself will continue its ignoring of all claims of chivalry and humanity. We use the words " of chivalry and humanity " advisedly, for there is no man in England above the level of a creature so warped by emotionalism as to be a mere animal—and the opposition to the suffrage comes solely from the emotional or from the merely animal—there can be no man in England who, if he really knew what is taking place, would not vote for the instant downfall of the Prime Minister, of Mr. Gladstone and of their supporters in the Cabinet. Whether the measures that the Liberal party advocate are good or bad is neither here nor there. But that the Prime Minister should remain at the head of the party means that the party itself is a pledge to their irreconcilable attitude, that the party itself is dragged through the mud at the tails of these men who have insulted, who have committed outrages, who have poured stupid scorn upon women. And so efficient is the party machine that, although you will find probably a small majority of Liberals in the House to be really in favour of fair treatment to women, and although every one of the other members, set though their faces may be in secret against this measure of justice—although every one for the purpose of the hustings is protesting as loudly as he may that he is in favour of women's suffrage and is hanging on the lips of suffragettes to learn by rote the arguments in their favour—although every member of the Liberal rank and file, either through conviction or through cowardice, professes himself an advocate of women's suffrage, the party cannot give any effect to its avowed desires because the leaders have committed themselves irrevocably. So that either the party or its leaders must go.

THE LIBRARIES AND THE PUBLIC

BUT whether the party leaders go or whether they stay the fact remains that it is lamentable that the leader of any party should be permitted by public opinion to take up such a position as that taken up by the Prime Minister. And the lamentable fact remains that, in the contending programmes of both parties, there is to be found no trace whatever of attention to the higher things of life. If it be true that the British people have the Press and the Government that they desire, then indeed lamentable are the deserts of the British people. With a Press sinking

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daily to an even lower level, with two dominant parties sinking always to lower levels of appeal, there seems to remain no scintilla of hope for anything not purely materialistic in the concerns of the State. And under cover of the political din the circulating libraries have made a stealthy and sudden attempt to gain the entire control of the output of literature in this country. They have made, that is to say, in the name of morality, a claim to establish a censorship over all books that are submitted for their circulation. Even if this claim be sincere it is one of singular insolence. The person to select the book that he desires to read is the reader. The circulating library is a commercial concern making its profits out of the brains of authors. For literature as such the circulating library does nothing and cares nothing. It circulates with equanimity the veriest trash or the most divinely inspired work of art. Upon the whole its commercial necessities cause it to look with more favour upon the veriest trash. For trash being easy to turn out is turned out in longer books, and it is from the longer books that the circulating libraries make their profits. This elementary fact of time and finance is very little appreciated by a subscriber. Yet it should be obvious that a long book takes longer to read, and that in consequence the long book being published at the same price as the short the libraries to satisfy their customers, need to purchase much fewer volumes if only all the books were long. In the past the libraries having made no effort to better the taste of their customers, have had no claim to establish a trade control. And they have realised that only by making some claim to be public benefactors can they establish any trade control at all. As to the expediency or inexpediency of the libraries refusing to circulate certain works we are unable to write dogmatically. There can be very little doubt that the railway bookstall of to-day is the purveyor of an immense amount of silly lewdness loosely disguised as fiction. And, if we could trust in the discrimination of a purely commercial mind we might say that there is no particular reason why Messrs. Smith and Willing as booksellers should not refuse to sell, or as librarians refuse to circulate a very large proportion of the works by whose sale they now profit.

UPON the day of writing these words we examined the contents of the bookstall at one of the smaller London railway stations. In the course of half an hour's inspection we were unable to discover one single article which any man of any

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cultivation or reflection could desire to read. On the other hand we saw five volumes costing one shilling apiece which must have been written solely and simply with the desire of awakening or of appealing to animal appetites of the purely unthinking. We hold no particular brief for the suppression of this class of literature. Something might possibly be said for it: a great deal is constantly being said against it. But, supposing discrimination were a thing of easy attainment, we see no reason why the proprietors of railway bookstalls should not refuse to sell these books and the libraries to circulate them. The danger is that, once the public conceives this right to its servants, it loses the power itself to discriminate, it puts itself into the hands of a body of censors who can have no particular claim to be judges of morality, who can have no claim at all to be judges of what is or is not literature. And the same hand which discards a book with such a title as "The Woman in the Way" or "Tears of Desire," is only too likely to refuse along with them books like "Madame Bovary" or "The Kreutzer Sonata." Moreover, by thus permitting its servants to become its masters, it puts into the hands of this new censorship a commercial power of the newest and of the most formidable. The libraries intensely dislike short books, and the short book may be regarded as undesirable. What, then, is to prevent the libraries from refusing to circulate short books whilst declaring to the public that the book is undesirable? There are very few books published into which an interested mind cannot—and even quite honestly—read undesirable meanings. That the libraries, being purely commercial bodies have commercial ideals very strongly before them is proved by their boycotting of Mr. William de Morgan's "It Never Can Happen Again." This they did because it was published at 10s. Now there was probably never a book that was published since the fatal reduction in the price of a novel to 6s. that so richly deserved to be sold at the price of 10s. It is, to begin with, of enormous length and in this the libraries find their account. Mr. de Morgan is an author of a very vast popularity and in this, too, the libraries should find their account. Its morality is of the most blameless. This the libraries profess to desire and its literary merit is arguably of a very high standard. But the libraries are the chief enemy of the writer. For them it is essential that his wares should be produced at the lowest conceivable price. They have, however, so succeeded in circumscribing the market for literature that, unless the price of books can be raised, the breed of authors must very soon become extinct. This necessity of

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the author is, of course, eminently likely to prove of detriment to the libraries. In consequence the libraries have determined upon the first attempt to crush out the public-spirited but temerarious author.

SYNCHRONISING as this does immediately with the libraries' claim to a moral censorship the situation may be deemed exceedingly ominous. The public, of course, can be expected to care very little whether an author gets a living wage or no. But it can be expected to care whether it gets full value for its subscription or not. And there is a very considerable danger that unless the library reader—and the matter is almost entirely in the hands of the library reader—that unless the library reader takes the matter with the seriousness that it demands he will be subscribing to libraries that will more and more limit the stock of books that they purchase. The perfectly simple method of combat is for the reader absolutely to insist upon receiving a copy of every book that he orders under threat of withdrawing his subscription if the book be not obtained for him. He will then be able to judge for himself as to whether a book is undesirable or as to whether it is too costly or too short to suit the pockets of the librarians. It has been suggested that authors should refuse to permit their books to be censored, and this suggestion would be excellent if authors had any public spirit. Of this quality, as a body, they possess unfortunately absolutely none. And such an action on their part, unless it were carried out by a very large proportion of writers would exactly suit the book of the libraries. The libraries would very calmly refuse to purchase copies of books by protesting authors, they would buy those of the blacklegs in slightly larger numbers and they would present to their public the excuse that the authors had boycotted them. For what the libraries desire is to purchase as few books as they possibly can.

AT THE PICTURE GALLERIES

THE Exhibition of the Society of Portrait Painters at the New Gallery was on the whole disappointing. There are, however, some portraits of considerable interest—one of Christina Rossetti by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and one of William Rossetti by Ford Madox Brown. Mr. William Orpen has an agreeable picture of an interior called *A Portrait*—a figure of a woman lying on a sofa at the foot of a magnificently hung four-post bed, the whole

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making a pleasant harmony of colour. In the room devoted to portraits of members of the musical and dramatic professions are noticeable, one of Mr. Forbes Robertson by Mr. H. de T. Glazebrook, Mr. Martin Harvey as "Sidney Carton" in *The Only Way* by Mr. Harrington Mann; a charming portrait of Miss Marie Tempest by Mr. Jacques E. Blanche, also one by Mr. William Nicholson. There is also that excellent portrait of the late Sir Henry Irving by Bastien le Page and a portrait of Miss Ellen Terry by G. F. Watts, so that it will be observed that in this, which we believe to be the last exhibition to be held in the old New Gallery, it is not the painters of to-day but those of yesterday and the day before who upon the whole make the most mark.

THE collection of pictures at the Knoedler Art Galleries is extremely interesting. The galleries have been taken by a select few in order to show their pictures to the public. This is a rational undertaking and has the advantage over the one-man show of giving variety. They strike a new note in picture exhibiting of giving no catalogue, but instead, of labelling each picture with the name and artist. This is convenient and less tiring whilst seeing the pictures, but it is difficult to remember titles without some memorandum. Mr. Charles Shannon has two fine examples of his work in the *Lady in Winged Hat* and *Miss Constance Collier*. These are large circular pictures, the figures being composed skilfully in line and agreeable in feeling. Mr. W. Orpen exhibits *The Painter*, a portrait of himself in costume, and *The Bar Hall by the Sea*, a very clever piece of realism. *Carrying the Law* by Mr. Rothenstein corresponds in style to his *Rabbis' Mourning* in the Tate Gallery, and *The Little Fountain* showing sunshine through pines in its quite other style is charming.

Mr. Harrington Mann has several pictures representing the young girl and children of the present day, notably the *Girl with a Book* and *The Fairy Tale*. Mr. J. E. Blanche has two pictures giving interiors of harmonious colouring and arrangement. There are several full-length portraits by Mr. J. Lavery; and Mr. Nicholson has the *Morris Dancer* of 1902 and one entitled *The Downs, Rottingdean*, in his ultra-simple style of colour and composition. The majority of the artists whose work we see at the Knoedler Gallery are also exhibiting in the winter exhibition of modern pictures by the New English Art Club.

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HERE *The New Bedford*, by Mr. Walter Sickert, shows the interior and audience of a music-hall in a dramatic and expressive manner. This artist has also several extremely clever black-and-white sketches. *The Baby's Bath* by Mr. Henry Tonks shows two figures, one holding a nude baby preparatory to bathing. The light thrown by the fire out to the figures is cleverly arranged and the baby is quite babylike—it recalls to mind some of the pre-Raphaelite renderings of babies. Mr. C. J. Holmes' *Roman Fell from Coupland Beck*, *Eden Valley from Mirrton Pike* and *Harter Fell from Mardale* are striking pictures of landscape, the last with its blue-black mountain and walled green fields in the foreground give one an intense feeling of that country and its uncompromising austerity.

A Woman Playing a Guitar by Philip Connard was in this artist's own style of considerable charm. Mr. John S. Sargent has a *Portrait of Mrs. Wedgwood*, a clever portrayal of character.

The Wreck of Mr. William Orpen and *On the Cliff* are extremely interesting. The peculiar note of hardness which Mr. A. E. John has could not have had a better subject than *The Man from New York*. It shows exactly that hardness which we look for and find in this type of American. Mr. Max Beerbohm's caricatures are a welcome drop of oil in the bucket of seriousness. Mr. Rothenstein is a most versatile artist, he gives us his wonderful mournful Rabbis in one style, then he has quite a Japanese effect in *Young Fashions in Trara* and *A Summer Auction*, and again an almost placid Turner-esque rendering in *A Sunrise* and *Sunset*. Mr. Muirhead Bone's water-colours are realistic and striking, especially one *A View in London* of housebreakers and hoardings in a thick, murky atmosphere. We wish—as we are never tired of preaching—that more of our artists would attempt to see what is beautiful, what is harmonious and what is mysteriously romantic in our own life. The artists of to-day in London are as earnest, as serious and as whole-hearted as any that we can call to mind, but in them all there is a certain lack of intellect—of the intellect that should let them see that in our day, as when Rembrandt painted the *Night-Watch*, the Primitives rendered Modern Italy or even as when Degas and Manet painted ballet girls—romance, rhythm, mass and colour are most easily to be studied in the life that is around them—are most plentiful and easy of attainment, just in our own streets.

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RECENT DRAMA

THE plays of the regular and commercial theatre that have lately most stood out from the general run of failures and incompetencies have been *Smith* by Mr. Somerset Maugham at the Comedy Theatre, *Don* by Mr. Rudolph Besier and *The Little Damsel* by Edward Hoffs. The last shows some genius, at any rate in its first act, as a transcription of modern life—of a very odiously materialistic side of modern life. *Don* has nothing whatever to do with life of any kind, but it is at any rate naïve and fresh. *Smith* is irritating beyond conception as the work of an exceedingly clever man who dishes up for an unintelligent audience every possible kind of yesterday's meat.

Smith, in fact, is a play to appeal to the middle classes—to those middle classes to whom Father Vaughan at his lowest so intimately appeals. It is the appeal of cheap sarcasm: the appeal of the preacher who points out to his delighted audience the moths which are in the eye of each man's neighbour. It never goes deep into the recesses of human relationships, it galls no withers because the meannesses that it exposes are the meannesses of eccentric figures, whereas the play that really disturbs an audience strikes at the meannesses of the common man. Let us consider the story of *Smith*.

It is that of a young man who returns from Rhodesia after an absence lasting eight years. He desires to discover a wife to take back to his colonial farm. His sister has married a man much older than herself and has a "tame cat" constantly dancing attendance on her without the slightest objection on the part of the husband. A girl, Emily Chapman, who had jilted Tom Freeman before he went out to Rhodesia because he had lost his money on the Stock Exchange, throws herself at him and succeeds in making him propose to her. Then a friend of his sister loses her baby and is told of the death of it by the parlourmaid Smith, whilst they are all playing bridge. Emily Chapman comes and tells Tom Freeman that she has deceived him in saying that she had always loved him; she had been engaged twice in the interim and she releases him from the engagement. Tom Freeman in the meantime has had time to look round at the state of society and decides that the only

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physically (this is made a great point of) and morally healthy woman he can find to make his wife is Smith, the parlour-maid. And thus it ends with a beginning.

COULD anything in this world be more exasperating as coming from a really clever man. We have had this colonial innumerable times. He returns to a society which he has deserted because he had not the courage to face its competitions and its problems. For the man who has not the courage to face these things, who retires from the world to find a lower plane of life in which his physical self may predominate over his intellectual activities, is no more to be commended than the mediæval monk who had not sufficient courage to face, such as it was, the whirl and hurry of the mediæval world. From the monk as from the colonial, criticism of those who remain alive is a sheer impertinence. The impulses of any form of life are regulated and are excused, are condemned and are palliated by the values set by that particular form of life. Thus a Chinaman might well be excused, might even be praised in an overpopulated land, for drowning his superfluous daughters. And similarly he may be praised for being extravagant in cleanliness, meticulous in his dress and of an extraordinarily nice honesty. He drowns his daughters because he fears to be unable to support them; he is disgusted at the odours to be found in the most aristocratic of European drawing-rooms, not because he is callous or degenerate, but because he is forced to adjust himself to being very thick upon the ground. And just as it is odious and facile for a European to condemn Chinamen for paying such attention as experience has taught him to be necessary in his State that is so much more overcrowded than our own, so it is impertinent of a colonial with an elbow-room of many miles to criticise our life from which he has fled. The fact is that we who have the courage to face out the problem of a world which is forced more and more to live in crowds must have also the defects of that courage. We must have the foresight to avoid bringing superfluous children into the world, we must learn to speak tactfully in low voices and not to shout, as if we were upon a wheat farm, perpetual truths that must be disagreeable to our neighbours. We have to learn in fact that it is more moral, because it is more citizenlike, to be polite in our personal contacts, to be reasonably cleanly, to be not too often strenuous and to be almost always modest, at least in appearance. Mr. Maugham is quite clever enough to see all this, but he has

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preferred to give us the nauseatingly old story of the rough diamond. And the only satisfactory point about *Smith* is that, selecting from amongst the people with whom he comes in contact—and Mr. Maugham to suit his own ends has made these as arbitrarily disagreeable as he reasonably could—selecting from amongst these the most animally attractive—Mr. Freeman should retire once more to barbaric wilds from a world in which he is not fitted to play a part. Mr. Maugham, in fact, knows his job extraordinarily well. He knows that each man in his audience, imagining himself to be—if he really gets the chance—bluff, simple, honest and with a touch of heroism, just as each member of the congregation of a comfortable preacher imagines himself endowed with all the Christian virtues—that each member of his audience will be moved not to clean up his own household or to inquire into his own conscience, but to pat himself on the back and to feel comfortingly how very much superior he is to his neighbour who slumbers in the next pew or chuckles happily in the stall in front of him. It is done with supreme skill, but it is a thousand pities.

Social Parasitism

By J. A. Hobson

“PARASITE” has served so much as a term of abuse and denunciation that its value is unduly discounted by sober thinkers. In bringing to a head our criticism of the “natural” rights of property and their infringements, it may be well to show that “parasitism” in its social signification is no loose rhetorical analogy but a fact resting upon close identity of processes.

The biological definition of a parasite is “a being which lives at the expense of another without destroying it and without doing it service.”* But this definition requires qualification and amendment to make it cover the most notorious forms of organic parasitism. Some parasites live by the destruction or direct consumption of their host, as carrion birds and other feeders on the dead. Others, feeding on live organisms, gradually waste or destroy their host, as do the ivy, the dodder and various parasitic worms. Others, again, render some service to their host, if only in keeping down other parasites, but where the services are slight and wholly incommensurate with the cost they entail, the term parasite rightly applies.

At the same time we cannot say without qualification that every being that lives at the expense of another is a parasite, for all life is parasitic in the sense that every species preys upon other species. Is the human species parasitic because it lives on animals and vegetables? If we answer yes, we enlarge the use of the term to its virtual destruction. If we answer no, we can only ultimately justify this answer by pointing to the “utility which attends certain sorts of living upon others.” Where the killing and eating of other animals and vegetables is a source of energy to a predatory species and helps their organic progress in structure and function, parasitism cannot be rightly imputed to it, excepting on the supposition that the survival and growth of this species is itself undesirable in the interests of a wider economy. If this is so, the test of “parasitism” will be the

* “Parasitism, Organic and Social,” by Massart and Vadervelde (Sonnenschein).

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effect rather than the method of predatory practices. Where the effect is to raise the fitness of the predatory species, whatever social standard of fitness be assigned, the charge of parasitism cannot be held to lie. Where the effect is mere maintenance or deterioration the charge holds good.

Mere increase of some sort of "fitness," however, must not suffice to meet the charge. The struggle for food may be acute among certain orders of parasites when "hosts" are scarce or reproduction rapid. This struggle may evolve a sort of "fitness," educating some particular force or cunning, but if this "fitness" involves injury to some higher species and so is condemnable in a wider organic sense, it does not remove the imputation of parasitism.

Organic parasites are sometimes distinguished according to the kind of benefit they derive from their practice, whether it be food obtained by eating the body of their host, energy or support by using the host for shelter or advantage of position, or protection by means of mimicry. It is easy to see that this distinction may be closely applied to social parasitism. The moneylender who fastens his fangs in the economic body of the Russian village is spoken of as the "mir-eater." He consumes the economic substance of his victim. The sweater of labour-power corresponds to the second class, drawing support from the current energy rather than from the substance or concrete property of those he uses. The mimetic parasite, which for protection simulates the appearance of a dangerous kinsman, or for assistance the appearance of a serviceable one common alike in the lower animal and the vegetable world, has its close social counterpart in the host of quacks and shams who hang on to the skirts of the skilled professions; or still more closely in the beggars who, simulating misery or disease, trade upon the relief bestowed by pity and humanity upon genuine cases of distress. Indeed, the sham-work or amateur activity assumed by many members of the "independent classes" may be fairly classed as belonging to "mimetic parasitism," though the actual sources of their "independence" belong to another parasitic faculty.

But the more serviceable analysis of forms of parasitism relates to the methods employed by parasites to gain their ends at the expense of their "host." The two leading species are termed "predatory" and "proprietary." The latter in the organic world is typified by worms which infest the alimentary canal, or the parasitic animalculæ which feed upon the blood or tissues of the body. In the body politic, a proprietary class,

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drawing its subsistence not from its effort but directly from some economic power to tax the property or the energy of another class or society, occupies the same position. The persons who live upon "economic rent" or upon the interest of property obtained otherwise than by their personal exertions belong to this parasitic species. We may here distinguish, if we choose, those whose accumulated output of energy during one portion of their lives enables them to be non-productive consumers during another portion. To such persons, retired officials living upon pensions, retired tradesmen living on the continued profits of a business they have built up, or other persons who in later life live on personal savings, some of the characteristics of the parasitic organisms visibly adhere, in particular the degeneration of organs atrophied by continued disuse. But such a life is best excluded from our definition: support during old age or infirmity, derived from the products of earlier activity, is no more a parasitic habit than the reliance upon a store of winter food which many animals practice. It is not possible here to enter upon the discussion whether interest-taking is, under all circumstances, a parasitic habit. The defence of interest derived from savings effected by the recipient, accompanied by abstinence on his part and by productive employment of the savings, may or may not be made good against the charge of parasitism. For present scientific purposes it is best to give this class the benefit of the doubt. But the case of those who live upon incomes derived from inheritance or gifts, or upon so-called "unearned increments" lies beyond dispute. These persons must be classed as proprietary parasites either upon a class whose productivity they idly exploit or upon society. Those who hold that all "value" is a social product, or those who only go so far as to admit that economic rent is a social product, will prefer to regard these independent gentlemen as parasites upon the social organism.

These proprietary parasites simply lie in or on the body of their "host" and drain his substance or his energy: when their parasitic habit is fully developed they do not even take the trouble to insert their fangs and actively devour their victim. Ants, grown parasitic through the introduction of foreign slaves into the community, became too torpid to move or to feed themselves.

Consideration of the origin of parasitism throws useful light upon the question on its social side. Interesting examples are given in which reciprocity of benefit gives way to the one-sided benefit of parasitism. This collapse of mutualism occurs not

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infrequently in the relations between plants and insects. MM. Massart and Vadervelde quote the instance of the relations between the toad-flax and the bumble-bee. "In the toad-flax the neck of the corolla is completely closed up by a protuberance of the lower lip, and it requires a heavy insect like the bumble-bee to rest on this in order to press it down and give access to the nectary. Then, while the insect sucks the nectar, its back becomes powdered with pollen, which it afterwards deposits upon the stigma of another flower of the same species, which it has visited for a fresh repast. So far there is reciprocity of services, for the flower has need of the insect. But very often the bumble-bee finds it more convenient to pierce through the wall of the nectary from without, and so sucks the honey without fertilising the flower."

The same decay of mutualism is a visible cause of human parasitism. The landowner who took an active part in ordering agriculture, or who, under the mutualism (unequal though it was) of a feudal system, furnished protection to the agricultural workers, has, like the bumble-bee, discovered a way of "sucking the honey without fertilising the flower?" The history of English agriculture during the last five centuries would furnish many stages in this process of degeneration, showing a gradual shrinkage of the active functions of the landowner, as he passed into the condition of a mere rack-renter. The process is not yet completed in most cases. Where the landlord still administers his property, collects his rents and fulfils certain public functions connected with his "property," some semblance of mutuality is retained. A certain activity is often required from parasites in order effectively to insert the sucker and extract the honey: even bees which no longer fertilise the flowers may be busy. A fine humour inheres in the common belief that a great landed proprietor justifies his being by the laborious precautions he must take in order to extract and collect his full economic rents and administer his property to secure this end. Leeches are notoriously active insects. It may, indeed, be conceded that while true mutualism has virtually disappeared, the parasitism of the landowner is not perfected until he has reached the haven of absenteeism, and from a collector of rents has become a mere receiver, opening his mouth to receive for food the fruits of others' labour. The same process of change is visible throughout modern industrial society. The big capitalist-employer in most large businesses tends constantly to reduce his active co-operation: for a time he will busy himself in the office, checking accounts so as to ascertain that he is getting his full share of profits;

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but gradually he passes into the condition which, discarding all serious work, pretends to justify itself by claims of general direction and responsibility ; later still the business is formed into a company and he assumes the post of director, which becomes more and more nominal as time passes on until, in effect if not in name, he becomes a mere drawer of dividends. It may, indeed, be said that one of the chief economic motives in the growth of the modern joint-stock company, which is now the leading type of business structure, is the facilitation of this parasitic tendency.

The feigned or formal activity is often a sort of natural cloak of defence which the parasite throws over his essential impotence. As ants and other exploited " hosts " are known to turn against their parasites, so the social parasite is conscious of the risks and seeks to safeguard his position by pretended services which shall give a social sanction to his idleness and rapacity. Public spirit, family or class traditions, the lust of self-assertion in the exercise of personal power, and other motives doubtless prompt our hereditary aristocracy to busy themselves with legislation and administrative functions ; but along with these stimuli co-operates the pressure of a half-conscious need to screen their economic parasitism by a display of volunteer activity which shall appear as an equivalent for the unearned income they enjoy. This protective cunning is one among many better impulses to various kinds of philanthropic or charitable work. Those who earn great riches easily, and therefore parasitically, instinctively attempt to turn the edge of popular envy and avert dangerous scrutiny by a parade of generosity. When a Rockefeller or a Rothschild endows a church or a university, the halo of his munificence is a screen which hides the economic sources of his riches from the public eye ever subservient to the proverb that forbids one to look a gift-horse in the mouth. This, at any rate, is a result of millionaire endowments, and it is reasonable to assign it to its natural cause. Indeed, this " charity " which is " good business " must itself be noted as a species of mimetic parasitism, a compound of greed and timidity simulating altruism. So do vices not uncommonly trade upon virtues, acquiring a specious similarity, even as the dead-nettle simulates the hairs of the stinging-nettle which protects it against herbivorous animals. The crudest form of this parasitism is conscious hypocrisy, but that is uncommon. This protective parasitism of riches works most effectively when its agent is not fully conscious of his motives, viz., when the protective impulse is so intimately associated with genuine impulses of benevolence that the agent believes himself to be activated by a single philanthropic desire. Sinecures of every kind, representing a decay of

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mutualism, survive as forms of a similar mimicry; registered offices and nominal duties "protect" the receiver of an unearned official salary. "George Ranger" so draws an idle income for the pretended care of royal parks, the feigned duties of flunkeydom "justify" the considerable salaries of various officers attached to the "Household."

Effective protection of unearned incomes more commonly implies considerable activity upon the part of the social parasite. The grub settling down dodder-like to drain the sap, or worm-like to devour the intestines of its host, is the exception rather than the rule in human life. The obviously idle classes form but a small proportion of the parasitic species. The same is true of all animal parasitism, the predatory species abound more than the proprietary. The latter are commonly born in the body of their host, or, once attaining a full food supply, stay and feed, their sole activity confined to feeding upon freely given and often pre-digested food: their life degenerates to that of a mere sucker, their other organs being atrophied by disease. The animal that has to find a series of "hosts," that has to contend by force or cunning with others of his sort, for the possession of a "host," is properly distinguished as "predatory." He needs more constant, intense, and complex activity. So long as "hosts" are relatively scarce, the predatory habit does not necessarily produce degeneration: on the contrary the struggle for existence, even for existence at the expense of another, may not merely compel an active life, but evoke certain special forms of "fitness" which keep the "parasite" in a relatively high condition. This is the case with many beasts of prey. Scientific terminology does not, as a rule, class these relatively energetic predatory animals with parasites. But taking the "service" test laid down at the beginning of our analysis, we are bound to include at any rate those predatory animals which live at the expense of animals whose life is as serviceable in the wider economy of nature as their own. The general characteristic, however, of predatory as of proprietary parasitism is that the activities exercised in securing prey are unproductive and lead to degeneration of the predatory species. Large classes of admitted parasites were originally predatory in an active sense: this is true of all crustaceans and of many species of molluscs.

The predatory, as distinguished from the proprietary classes, form the largest number and variety of social parasites. The lower grades of the criminal classes constitute the largest and the simplest order. The difficulties and dangers of their life maintain and educate certain fitnesses of mind and body. But the

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general test of parasitism—degeneration—is plainly visible ; their nomadism and insecurity of life, and the association with injurious vices and diseases involved by their practices, impair their vitality and reduce the number of their offspring which grow to adult vigour.

With the destructively criminal class we may count the tramp, the prostitute, the pander and a heterogeneous mass of corner-men and so-called casual labourers in towns, who live upon some other class or neighbourhood without contributing any real services.

But the more complex types of predatory parasite infest the higher social strata. The industrial term “middleman” covers a considerable variety. Not that all middlemen are parasites by any means, for almost all workers are in some sense middlemen. Even in the case of classes of middlemen who seem at first sight to thrust themselves between two useful classes, and to suck an unnecessary profit by exploiting workers, much discrimination is required. The typical middleman, the Jew “sweater” in the tailoring trade, cannot be dismissed as a merely superfluous person, a sheer parasite. For though the net service he renders to society is dubious, he is distinctly serviceable both to the low-class manufacturing firms who employ him, and to the “green” labour which he organises and employs. The entire trade of which he forms part may be socially unsound, but he is often an essential factor in the structure and not a parasitic growth upon it. But though this may be true of many middlemen, who are, under present conditions, necessary links either between producer and consumer or between two sets of producers, it is by no means true of all. The middleman is often a mere predatory parasite, fastening his fangs upon the economic weaklings in some trade, and taking profits totally disproportionate to the slight services he renders. It is commonly some ignorance or business incapacity which this parasite exploits. A notorious example is the fish and the fruit trades of large cities where the vast bulk of the profits pass into the hands of a few city men who corner the produce and “rig” the market. It cannot be said that these men perform no useful function, but the slight use they serve is not the equivalent of the incomes they earn, and the bulk of their energy is devoted to seizing and sucking their prey. No inconsiderable portion of the activity of “the City” is parasitic in a similar sense and degree. Under a thin cloak of social service and genuine utility it covers a great predatory system. This is best visible in the proceedings of finance. From the small moneylender who thieves upon the misfortunes of a village in

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India or Russia to the magnates of finance who promote gigantic companies, float loans, or bull and bear stocks in London or New York, the majority of dealers in "money" live for the most part a predatory life. I am well aware that a strong economic defence of these finance functions is possible. The moneylender, after all, may often save his client from ruin by enabling him to tide over a crisis, and it may be well worth the client's while to pay a high rate of usury: the stockjobber may really be directing large currents of capital into serviceable channels and is, indeed, a necessary instrument in this important work of distribution. But those best acquainted with the actual operations of these financial classes are aware that enormous abuses are commingled with these uses. The moneylender often creates the necessity on which he trades, tempts his victim and drags him helpless into his toils to be sucked dry at leisure; the bigger financier, by speculating in fictitious stock or fictitious goods, creates artificially the fluctuations of price from which his profits are derived; the promoter, by false valuations and specious advertisement, deceives investors and cancels the value of their savings: the princes of finance mould politics and public opinion, raise national crises and sway the destiny of empires for the benefit of their pockets. The very difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of separating legitimate from illegitimate finance is the protection and encouragement of financial parasitism. The complex and internecine nature of predatory parasitism in finance is well illustrated by recent disclosures of blackmailing by the Press. The very power of the blackmailer to extort blackmail is conclusive evidence of the illicit or parasitic gains of the financiers who resent disgorging these gains.

The term "blackmailer" in this connection serves to introduce notable species of predatory parasites. Wherever "monopolies" or other legal or illegal abuse of economic power exists, there arises a class of parasites who, by mingled extortion and connivance, live upon these abuses. In American politics we have interesting species of this order: for example, the class of men who, possessed of some little political influence, obtain a living by threatening railroads and other corporations with embarrassing legislation in order that they may be bought off. So definite a class is this that great companies keep agents at Washington for the express purpose of dealing with them. The "boss" in American party politics, and, indeed, the professional politician in general, is little else than a social parasite upon the body politic. The energy and skill of organisation he employs, the manipulation of the voting machine and the attainment of

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party victories represent pernicious activity by means of which "spoils" are won. Living upon "spoils" is parasitism pure and simple; when "spoils" take the shape of over-paid offices or sinecures we have partial or mimetic parasitism.

A curious instance of the same order of blackmailing by mimetic parasitism is the case of the street musician who in working-quarters of the town plies a legitimate trade, supplying what is wanted and collecting reasonable pay for it, but who in more aristocratic quarters becomes a mere blackmailer, threatening to assault the more sensitive ears of the educated classes in order to be paid to go into another street.

Certain modern forms of commercial parasitism deserve special notice. The newspaper press offers a curious variety of mimetic parasitism in the modern trade advertisement. The chief object of the modern advertiser of saleable goods is to conceal the self-recommendation of advertisement, and to trade upon the news and editorial departments of the paper. With this object he induces the publisher to allow him to plant his advertisement among the news columns, without any mark to distinguish it from news, to insert paragraphs in the editorial notes, and to use the confidence which the public reposes in the editorial opinions in order to pass off his self-recommendation as the spontaneous recognition of merit by the Press. For the privilege of thus deceiving the readers he pays an extra price, the editor condoning the fraud upon his readers by taking the wages of his prostitution.

It may seem that, in applying the term parasite to all those who live at the expense of others without contributing any substantial service in return, I am unduly stretching the term. It may therefore be well to bring home by closer illustration its appropriateness. The dodder or degenerate convolvulus that fastens on the clover, sucks its sap to save the trouble of preparing its own food and loses its leaves in consequence, degenerating into a mere "mouth," is an admitted parasite. So is the drone in the hive or the slave-owning ant. The essence of parasitism is here seen to seem to consist in the substitution of the energy of another being for one's own in functions directly necessary for the support of life. In both instances parasitism induces physical degeneration, involving as one of its consequences inability to propagate a sturdy stock. On the other hand, the predatory parasite, whose practices require energy and involve him in some struggle for life, only need suffer such decay as is implied in his inability to support himself independently of his prey: a predatory "fitness" will survive. So in predatory classes of humanity—the brigand, the adventurer, the flash burglar, the stock-gambler,

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the company-promoter—conserve and even evolve by competition high qualities of predatory skill. But it is different with the proprietary parasite. The same atrophy of functions, the same inability to propagate sound stock which mark the vegetable and animal world, shows themselves in humanity. The mere declaration that a man is living upon an unearned income does not suffice to bring his parasitic nature home to us. To understand this, we must see what he buys with his unearned income. Domestic service in some shapes is evidently a legitimate division of labour. But when it passes into the form of certain closely personal services it becomes, by analogy with other types of life, parasitism. Here as elsewhere it is not easy to draw an exactly logical line of cleavage. But we may say that, whereas the preparation of food is a legitimate division of labour, the dependence upon another to feed one is parasitism; and so with clothing and other necessities. It is said that no man is a hero to his valet, but he is commonly a parasite upon his valet, for a man who cannot or does not put on his own clothes can be described no otherwise. A person with “an independent income” (*i.e.* a person entirely dependent for his income upon the productivity of others) always tends towards complete parasitism, he need neither clothe nor feed himself. He may and often does struggle successfully against the tendency to complete inactivity by undertaking work he is not obliged to do, or substituting a mimetic work termed “sport” for the genuine article. But normally the tendency is too strong, and after middle age all the natural symptoms of proprietary parasitism begin to show themselves. These symptoms he calls gout, rheumatism, dyspepsia, &c.; in reality they are the symptoms of the over-nutrition and the under-function of the parasite. The attempt to eat and digest a dinner which another has earned for you defeats itself, because the exertion implied in earning the dinner is naturally related to the capacity to digest it. “Whoever will not work neither shall he eat” is a physical as well as a moral law, and a parasitic life is an ultimately futile endeavour to evade it. The parasite fights with all the cunning he can buy against the natural degeneration his practice entails. Incapable of nurturing her children she buys wet nurses; unable to digest the food he has not worked to get he buys it pre-peptonised; averse from arduous exercise he invents a profession of “masseurs” whose business it is to furnish false exercise of the muscles and fictitious energy. It will not be long before we have a regular trade in the transfusion of blood from the healthy poor to the diseased, anæmic rich. The development of hygienic

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science will, when the millionaire dispensation is fully come, largely concern itself with the provision of means whereby the rich may, ghoul-like, live upon the vitality of the poor. These instances of direct physical dependency are only the simplest and the most dramatic instances of true parasitism in the social economy.

Taking a wider social survey, we find throughout history instances of local and national parasitism. Rome under the Empire is only the most notorious of a host of examples of predatory or proprietary nations, sucking their sustenance from others. In a broad sense the southern part of England may be described as parasitic. Its real productivity is insignificant. Large towns with well-to-do populations, like Brighton, Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells, contribute scarcely anything to their own support, while an enormous proportion of the work of the Metropolis is predatory activity fraught with no net social utility. Taking the home counties and the populous coast towns, one would probably be justified in saying that the productive work done in these districts does not, so far as the upper and middle classes are concerned, cover one tenth of the consumption. What the pleasure-centres of the south are to the rest of England, England herself is becoming to the Empire. Through all history the nucleus of great empires, forming the seat of government and wielding the power of taxation, has tended towards a predatory state. A certain self-containment of England has kept her within moderation in the treatment of dependencies. For the most part she has eschewed the direct methods of plunder adopted by great empires of the past. But indirectly and surely parasitic habits are growing upon her. Our treatment of India best illustrates our more subtle modes. Not by direct extortion of tribute do we suck advantage out of her; trade, officialism, and investments are the modern methods, more effective for the very reason that they retain the semblance and to some extent the reality of mutualism. Some work we do for India, but nothing at all commensurate with the large sums we draw from her as expenses of government, pensions, profits on trading monopolies and other investments. It seems probable that in the not remote future both England and other highly developed industrial nations of West Europe will, through the economic suckers of investment, live to a larger and larger extent a parasitic life, exploiting under a system of economic serfdom or unequal exchange the lower races of the earth; the early mutualism of their relations gradually lapsing into sheer parasitism when the countries of the lower races have been fully

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opened up and equipped with the necessary industrial capital by the investing classes of the elder European nations and the United States.

The substitution of economic for political suckers will not enable England or any other nation to escape the penalty which history imposes on the parasitic habit. The conversion of working-centres into pleasure-centres, the endeavour to get satisfaction through the sensory nerves with inhibition of the motor nerves, must everywhere throughout organic nature be attended by functional degeneration and structural decay. As in plant and lower animal life so in human life. The history of the idle classes in all nations shows that families which have lived parasitically for generations are unable to maintain themselves in physical existence, their stock fails and they die out: this is true alike of an idle aristocracy and of a class of tramps or criminals. Will not the same law hold of nations? There are two explanations for the failure of an individual, a class, a nation. The one is that it finds food and other physical necessities too hard to obtain, the other that it finds them too easy. The latter usually means substituting plunder for work. So underfeeding or overfeeding it starves or suffers plethora. Either process leads to decay and ultimate extinction of the stock. Is it not possible that the decline of the birth-rate, and even of the population in our most developed industrial nations, may be related to the parasitic habits of modern trade and finance in their influence upon the distribution of wealth and upon regularity of employment?

The Contending Forces

By L. T. Hobhouse

THERE is no need to emphasise the magnitude of the controversy which will be decided this month. On the most superficial view the issues are larger and cut deeper than any which the country has been called on to decide since 1832. Before the Budget was heard of there were measures at stake, measures affecting education, affecting the liquor traffic, affecting Scottish land, large enough to occupy the public mind at any ordinary election. The Finance Bill probed still deeper. It raised the question of land-taxation, the question of "super-wealth," the question of the whole basis of public finance. By revealing the direction in which a Free Trade Chancellor must look for the increased revenue which public expenditure demands, it raised by implication the entire tariff controversy, and the vote of the electors this month will decide, among other things, whether we shall adhere to the fiscal system of sixty years or revert to the methods of an older age. Yet all these questions, great as they are, have been merged in one which is everywhere felt to be not merely great, but vital—the question whether the House of Lords or the House of Commons is to be the predominant partner in the British Constitution. No one then needs to be told that the issue is great and far-reaching. Yet to understand how things have come to this pass, to grasp the social tendencies, which flowing from diverse sources towards conflicting aims have now met in a centre where the future of the nation must be decided, is no such easy matter. There are those to whom the action of the House of Lords will appear as one of those meaningless freaks that have been christened misprints in history. As against this view it may, I think, be shown to have been the natural outcome of a mood which has long been strengthening its hold upon the governing classes and is itself the product of the social situation. On the surface, the government of the country has been steadily growing more democratic. The First Reform Act was a definite breach with the old territorial aristocracy. It broke the political ascendancy of the landlords;

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and the blow was followed within fourteen years by the repeal of the Corn Laws which destroyed their economic monopoly. Power passed to the middle class, and the double movement towards freedom of trade and the regulation of the factory system arrested the social decline with which the country had been threatened between 1815 and 1846. But the middle class were pressed on in their turn by the mass of the workers, and by the Acts of 1867 and 1884 the United Kingdom for the first time earned some title to the name of a democracy. In little more than half a century, with no violent breach with the past, without even any very serious disturbance of public order, the reins of government had in appearance been transferred from the small class of landowners to the body of the people, and most observers would have predicted that the way of democracy now lay smooth before it. Masters of the constituencies, the masses were masters of the House of Commons. Masters of the House of Commons, they held the power of the purse. Holding the purse they were in control of the Constitution.

But social forces are not cheated by political forms. Political democracy was not matched by any corresponding equality, or equalitarian tendency, in the general structure of social life. In England, in particular, the mass of the workpeople, ill-educated, imperfectly organised, divorced from the land, proved themselves inadequately equipped for the political fight. Masters of the constituencies they might have been if mere numbers counted for everything. But the secret of empire under government by numbers is that numbers as such do not count. In spite of the ballot and universal suffrage a class, however preponderant numerically, does not control the government of the land unless, as a class, it has a clear consciousness of a common interest formulated for it as a political programme. To achieve anything resembling such a sense of common interest has been and remains a work of the utmost difficulty for a working population, so heterogeneous, so ill-assorted as the working population of these islands. There is nothing here comparable to the class-war of the academic socialist, and under existing conditions there never will be because there are no clear-cut distinctions of class. Whether the growth of a "class-consciousness" is or is not desirable is, of course, quite another question. What concerns us for the moment is to trace the elements of political weakness among the classes which form the numerical majority of the population, and we recognise these partly, as regards England, in the want of education, partly in the absence of any clearly realised unity of interest and of aim.

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But though the real political strength of the working classes was for many years slight, and has still to be proved, their admission to the political arena soon had its effect. The largest results of enfranchisement are indirect. It changes the character of the questions raised, and it affects the mental attitude both of politicians and the public. In particular the potential strength of the masses was vividly realised by their rulers, and the fear of Socialism was probably a force in our politics before Socialism itself could be seriously reckoned among the influences that count. Down to 1886 rank, wealth, property and business interests had been divided between the two parties, and if "land" and rank were preponderantly Conservative, there were classes of "wealth, capital and business" which may be said to have been mainly Liberal by contrast. But already, in the Gladstone Administration of 1880, the differences between the older interests and the newer "Radical programme" began to strain the party unity, and the new questions raised in 1886 caused a large exodus of the higher powers from the Liberal side. The Home Rule controversy might, in fact, be considered the occasion rather than the cause of the division which destroyed the ascendancy of the Liberal party and brought about its practical exclusion from power for the twenty years that followed. Yet this is hardly the whole truth. Home Rule was something less than the cause, but something more than the occasion of the formation of the Unionist party. It was not without significance that the division should come upon a question of ascendancy, for from 1886 onwards ideals of ascendancy came more and more into the foreground, in clearer and clearer antithesis to the rival idea of democratic equality. For this affiliation one may quote the authority of Lord Salisbury who, himself the doubting chief of an Imperialist party, fully alive to the weakness and perils of the Imperial idea and yet a convinced opponent of Home Rule, once in a notable speech traced to the movement which crushed the aspirations of Ireland, the main impulse of that Imperial enthusiasm which dominated the period of his own tenure of power.

No party in the modern world can live without an ideal. Whatever else may be said of our time, it is a time of movement and not of stagnation. It is a time in which there is no place for Conservatism in the strict sense of that term, and he who seeks to stand still finds himself forced, in effect, to move backwards. The forces that rallied to Unionism required a flag. Their followers demanded of them a programme. For a long time a single word inscribed on their banner sufficed. They were

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the party of Imperialism, and Imperialism became so popular that many of their opponents refused to leave them the monopoly of the word. But on the shoulders of a Liberal Imperialism was a misfit, and it would be fruitless now to revive the controversies which so long distracted the Liberal party. It is more interesting to trace the development of the Imperial idea in its own true home. Checked in its first advance by the disasters of the South African War, Imperialist sentiment cast about for some alternative means of self-realisation. To the hot fit the cold fit succeeded, and those who, in 1899, had spoken most confidently of the manifest destiny of the Anglo-Saxon to govern the world, were by 1903 seriously considering how Imperial unity and even national independence were to be maintained by a race threatened with decadence. For Imperial unity they turned them first in one direction and then in another. They bethought them of political forms and found the road barred by the stubborn sentiment of colonial autonomy; they considered military union and found even greater difficulties in the way of any effective organisation. They turned last to fiscal relations and here the fertile brain of Mr. Chamberlain⁷ devised methods which seemed to promise two-fold fruit. There was on the one hand, as it seemed, an opening for such commercial relations as would draw closer the Colonies to the Mother Country; there was on the other hand the protection of British industry against the growing rivalry of America and Germany. The two cards of Imperial unity and antagonism to the foreigner were played with the utmost skill. It was unfortunate for the player that the facts themselves stood in the way of a consistent game and that, even from the Tariff Reformer's point of view, the granting of a preference to the Colonies could only be represented as a sacrifice on the part of the Mother Country. I am not here concerned with the general merits, still less with the details, of the fiscal controversy. I am concerned only to point out the connection of ideas which has brought the Unionist party to its present position, and from this point of view the most significant change which the Tariff Reform movement has undergone has been the gradual displacement of the idea of Colonial Preference with which it started in favour of the cruder Protectionism which at first occupied quite a subordinate place. More and more, as the controversy has developed, Tariff Reform has become a movement for the protection of British industry against foreign competition. The more generous elements in the Imperial idea have receded into the background. National exclusiveness and anti-foreign feeling, strongly spiced with a

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timid sense of the insecurity of our own position, have taken their place. In sympathetic correspondence with this transformation there have been, during the same period, at once a marked development of Militarism and a striking change in the temper in which militarist ideas are put forward. Before the South African War it was supposed that the untutored Englishman could conquer the world by the superiority of his native endowment; that if Stalky and Co. were to be landed on some foreign shore with a small body of English ex-schoolboys and a free hand to do what they would, they would astonish the world. It was found in South Africa that others had practical capacity as well as Englishmen, and overweening self-satisfaction was followed by the revulsion of excessive nervousness. The Militarism of modern England is not so much the Militarism of ambition and aggrandisement; its more dominant motive is fear. That this fear is absolutely insubstantial, that its prevalence is one of the strangest products of social psychology that modern times have witnessed, we may freely allow. To explain it we should have to take into account many factors—the conditions under which a modern newspaper is produced, the mental attitude of the London public, the thirst for sensation and the intrinsic interest of terror as the sensation which ousts all others. None of these factors, however, would account for the result if there were not behind them more intelligent forces at work, which see in popular emotions useful means for bringing about changes that in a sane mood the people would never accept. As long as the Navy holds the seas and unless the airship should undergo a very improbable development, it will never be possible to convince the British people by argument that compulsory service can be necessary for the defence of these islands. But it is possible partly to cajole and partly to frighten people into the acceptance of that which in their right minds they would reject, and the determined effort to permeate the British mind with anticipations of war by every possible method, through the Press and upon the platform, in the schools and in the hours of amusement, must be set down as one of the most remarkable features of our day and as an integral element in the reactionary trend.

Nor is the alliance between Protection and Militarism difficult to understand. The appeal in both cases is to national antagonism, and here, as elsewhere, there is a subtle but very real alliance between national antagonism and class ascendancy. Military organisation is hierarchic organisation. It is fundamentally incompatible with democratic ideas. Every continental bureaucracy knows that it is on the army that its power

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depends and that the need for the army is only to be maintained by keeping up the rivalry of nations. It is not suggested that in imitating continental methods our reactionaries are fully conscious of what they do. They do not lay down a series of syllogisms exhibiting the inter-dependence of class interests, of Tariff Reform, of the control of the political machine, of the prevalence of military ideals, of national antagonisms and the dread of war. But though they do not set out these ideas in connected form, none the less between these ideas there is a real and substantial connection. They represent a drift which is one and the same in its many manifestations and its varied effects, and it is this drift which constitutes the immediate menace to English liberty and to European peace. Those who fall in with it from agreement at any point are rapidly swept by their sympathies into the middle of the stream. For men are determined by their sympathies and emotions far more than by a clearly connected system of articulate ideas, and through their sympathies the feelings and the efforts of those with whom they work operate upon them and shape their minds to the same ends. Logically one might say there is nothing to compel a Tariff Reformer to clamour for eight "Dreadnoughts" or sympathise with the movement for compulsory service, but in point of fact we find these things tending to go together. Logically it may seem strange to associate the ideal of ascendancy with an appeal to the emotion of fear. In reality the connection is intimate and inevitable. It is the connection that subsists between two moods of the same temperament. The principle of ascendancy balances the social pyramid on its apex. It appeals to the love of glory, but its permanent disposition is one of nervous alarm, and whether it be a class or a nation that relies more on its own strength than on the goodwill of its neighbours the same law will apply.

We may thus credit the governing classes with a fairly coherent ideal. In the teeth of political democracy "property" is to consolidate its position as the dominant influence in social life. It is not to be indifferent to the condition of the people. It will alleviate suffering and take measures for the material welfare of the masses so far as is compatible with its own claims, and it will persuade them of this compatibility by teaching them that the foreigner is the common enemy. As against this enemy, it will drill them into a national army, and protect their industries by a tariff, while it will offer to their pride the hegemony of a world-wide empire.

But these ideals are not within reach of the Reaction unless it

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can obtain control of the political machine. Now the experience of a generation might seem to have shown that under the rule of numbers wealth and power and rank in the land have a very fair chance of coming by their own. Electoral expenses do not get lighter and the burden of contests throws an immense advantage on the side of those who have money freely at their disposal. The Press, more and more the monopoly of a few rich men, from being the organ of democracy has become rather the sounding-board for whatever ideas commend themselves to the great material interests. The machinery of every sort of popular agitation requires money to work it. Hence it is that well-organised wealth has defeated unorganised numbers in the majority of the appeals to the country that have taken place since 1884. Nevertheless, though the greatest care is taken by the governing classes, there is always the chance that victory may slip through the fingers, and in 1906 such a catastrophe occurred. It was accordingly necessary to fall back upon a second line of defence and the ancient forms of the Constitution offered such a second line in the shape of an hereditary Chamber. How that defence has been used we all know. There is in fact no better measure of that consolidation and growth of a distinct reactionary ideal which I have tried to sketch than the gradual recuperation of the House of Lords. In the 'seventies and 'eighties it may fairly be said that the Second Chamber was regarded as an inconvenient anachronism which it was not necessary to extinguish because it could never seriously conflict with the will of the people. The lesson of 1884 might have cast some doubt upon this comfortable view, but it was soon succeeded by the banishment of the Liberal party from power, during which the extinction of the House of Lords ceased to be an urgent matter of practical politics. The short Liberal Government of the 'nineties, however, had a different tale to tell. Their majority was probably too weak to have carried Home Rule in any case, but it was the action of the Lords which covered them with contempt and which first gave the impression that Liberalism was impotent. None the less, when the wheel of time brought about the overwhelming majority of 1906 there were probably few who anticipated that the game of the 'nineties was to be played over again under the new conditions; and that it was in fact played with success must be attributed, it is to be feared, as much to the indecision of the Liberal Ministry as to the boldness of the Peers themselves. In that boldness they have probably exceeded the limit. They have certainly pushed matters to a point in which there no longer remains a choice for the

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Liberal party between fighting and running away. The battle is forced upon the Liberal, and forced on the very ground which he would have chosen for himself. To that extent it is probable that the reaction, somewhat recklessly led, has made a mistake. Whether that mistake will or will not be fatal the events of this month will show. For us the point of interest is to note the ideals implied in the action of the Lords and to understand how it is that they have come to take hold of the minds of able men. Quite clearly men like Lord Curzon have intimated their expectation that the Lords will emerge from the controversy revived and reformed. It is certain that if they do so they emerge as the dominant partner in the Constitution; masters of the Budget, they are also masters of whatever Government is in power. Able to force a dissolution in any session and, themselves immune from the uncertainties and the expense of elections, they can at any time wear down a popular party and reduce a House of Commons, however restive, to submission. There will be no longer any fear of such untoward results as those of 1906. The "interests" are to be enthroned in permanence in a House which stands above the storms of electoral controversy.

How can it be that such an ambition can be seriously cherished after seventy years' progress in the direction of democracy? If the analysis of opinion attempted in the foregoing pages is at all to be trusted, the answer is not difficult to find. The appeal of the Conservative party to the Lords is not an appeal to the interests of five hundred or six hundred titled persons, it is an appeal to wealth, to monopoly, to property in the sense in which property is opposed to personality. It is an appeal to the ideal of ascendancy, and it will make use of the whole of that mass of sentiment which we have endeavoured to describe as moving together in the great drift of Reaction. It is an appeal to the people on the basis of Tariff Reform and assuring them that it is through Tariff Reform alone that they will secure permanence of employment. It is an appeal to the middle classes at once; through their fear of Socialism, their dislike of foreign competition and their terrors for national security. It is an appeal in short to all the anxieties, all the elements of nervousness and suspicion that divide class from class and nation from nation. If the appeal succeeds it will carry with it, as immediate consequences, the dethronement of the House of Commons from its premier position, a series of experiments in Tariff Reform, and the advent of a Ministry in which the dominating influences will seek to establish compulsory

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service and will be everywhere recognised as a challenge to the peace of Europe.

If we turn to the other side and seek to analyse the tendencies which have brought Liberalism and Labour, the Progressive party as we may call it for short, to its present position, the task is harder in proportion as the ideals are of vastly more complex origin and are still in process of growth and fusion. The quarter of a century which has witnessed the rise and progress of the principle of ascendancy on the one side has seen a transformation of the older Liberalism under the influence of searching criticisms of the existing industrial and social order. These criticisms, however, have proceeded from two very different points of origin. One school, not large in point of numbers but influential from its activity and concentration, finds the root of economic injustice in monopoly in general and in the land system in particular. It contends for the absorption of monopoly values by the community and its ideal is ultimately State or municipal ownership of land. For the rest it is frankly individualistic and often resolutely opposed to the extension of the sphere of collective activity. It upholds free competition as the spur of enterprise, and its main criticism on the existing order is that competition is not really free while the land is in private hands, and while monopoly flourishes in the liquor trade or in the company-owned tramway. The other school, or set of schools, are Socialistic in the varying degrees and senses covered by that elastic and much abused term. In general they agree with the land-reformers in their positive policy, but they do not draw the line either at the land or at monopoly in general. They cherish at bottom a different ideal of society, in which competition as a motive is definitely replaced by the conception of social function and the just apportionment of reward in accordance with services rendered. Their analysis of wealth, as most consistently and consecutively expressed in Mr. J. A. Hobson's recent volume, discovers in all forms of industry, even where competition is as free as it can be made, elements of "surplus" not necessary to the stimulation of individual activity, and destined under a more just social organisation to be appropriated to the needs of the community. Among these needs they give a high place to the adequate maintenance of the individual citizen in such wise as to secure the full development of his physical, mental and moral capabilities. That he can secure this maintenance through the unimpeded play of competitive forces is a pious hope which they believe to be negated

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by experience, and they consider accordingly that the principal contingencies for which private provision fails should be met from those funds which the due taxation of the "surplus" would provide. They contemplate in short a kind of partnership between the individual and the community, the State affording a certain basis of material well-being on which it is left to the individual to build by his own efforts the fabric of his independence, comfort and even wealth. When they are told that they are sapping the springs of personal initiative they reply that hope is a better stimulus than fear, and that where the prospect of utter destitution fails to deter from idleness or thriftlessness, the reasonable assurances of winning comfort and attaining independence will stimulate exertion and justify foresight.

This I may be told is a very moderate version of "Socialism," and takes insufficient account of the general onslaught upon property and the total subordination of the individual to the State which belong to the true ideal of the Social Democrat. It may be admitted that to render a full account we should have to consider extremes on all sides. But my object for the moment is to get in this case as in the former at the main drift, and see whither it is leading us. For this purpose our task is simplified if we remark that Socialism, when it emerges from the study or descends from the platform and comes into action in the practical work of Parliamentary Debates and the Committee Stage of Bills, is forced to adjust itself to the complexities of actual life. The practical trend that comes about may be regarded as the resultant of two forces—of the ideal impinging on the actual. If once more we compound this resultant with the force issuing from the land reform movement, we get near to an analysis of the trend actually embodied in the Progressive party of the day. So far as land and monopoly generally are concerned the two forces are simply to be added to one another, and they find ready to act with them a very widely diffused sense of the weight of urban rents, of the squalor and crowded misery of the modern city, of the possibilities of a more orderly, harmonious life just being revealed by the pioneers of the garden city movement. They gain reinforcement from the anxieties justly raised by the progress of rural depopulation and in the compunction for the grey life of the farm labourer whom the flow of townward migration has left stranded on land in which he himself has no property and little hope of property. At another point they are aided by the municipal bodies, creditably anxious in the main to discharge their ever-increasing duties with efficiency, but sadly hampered by the burden of rates where

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a better system would have turned in their direction the rising tide of site values, to fill their coffers automatically with the wealth accruing from the growth of the town itself. The Land Clauses of the Budget, moderate, perhaps insufficient, as they were, yet appealed to all these interests and gave them a new hope of reviving country life and reconstituting urban life at the same time and on the same economic basis. The Lords, if they win the election, will have to reckon with these forces, which are now too deeply rooted and touch too many social interests to allow themselves to be lightly set aside. We are, in fact, witnessing in regard to the land one of those slow changes of mental attitude which are more potent than any mere revolution. From looking upon it as the property of a small number of individuals who were once politically and still remained socially the leaders of the nation, people have come to look on it rather as the great national asset, of which the owner is a steward who may be called to account, which must be used for national purposes, which is to bear on its broad rural acres a lusty peasant stock as a backbone of national vigour, which is to find room for the dwellings and space for the recreation of the urban toiler, and which contains in itself a store of agricultural and mineral wealth, whereby national industry may be expanded and the national coffers filled. In this sense the Progressive "trend" is setting strongly towards making England the property of the English nation, not by any wholesale expropriation of individuals, still less by any high-handed disregard of prescriptive right, but rather by the moderate and cautious but resolute and many-sided application of the principle of public overlordship.

But the problem of poverty goes beyond the problem of the land. Here there is apt to be division between the two tendencies that we have distinguished, but there is no doubt which of the two prevails upon the Progressive side. Few things are more remarkable than the way in which a practicable social policy commanding wide agreement has crystallised itself in the last two or three years. The Old Age Pensions Act may be taken as the turning-point, and it is probable that it will be spoken of by the future historian as an epoch in our social policy quite comparable to that of 1834. The pension system frankly recognised that under our industrial conditions the larger half of the community does not earn enough to provide for all the risks and contingencies of life. Accordingly it gives them, we may say, a certain lien on the property of the nation, a certain copartnership in the national wealth. This lien is at least to supply the minimum of subsistence during the years of helplessness, and

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it is conceived that the result is rather to stimulate than relax individual effort, because it gives to such effort a certain basis to work upon. But the years of helplessness are not confined to old age. There are the problems of childhood, of sickness, of premature invalidity, of unemployment and of the sweated worker to deal with. In all of these the trend is strong towards the admission of the same conception of copartnership, the alliance of personal and collective responsibility. The past year has seen the regulation of wages, for the first time since the decay of the mediæval statutes, deliberately recognised as a State function, and it is a function which will throw more definitely on to the public the responsibility for the maintenance of those who are probably incapable of earning the agreed minimum. But though the minimum is sometimes spoken of as a living wage, there is no talk, and can be no talk, of securing by legislation a standard which would actually cover all the normal risks of life for an average family. Here again we have to fall back on the copartnership of the individual and the State and it is probable that for some purposes the copartnership will here take the definite shape of State-aided insurance. How far this principle can be carried, experiment alone can decide; but there would seem good ground of hope that by its means together with the pension system the ordinary "risks" of sickness, accident, invalidity and old age could be adequately met, and the risk of unemployment sensibly mitigated. If this is true we stand within measurable distance of a time when the life of the average workman, skilled or unskilled, will in its own way partake of much the same security and stability as are now enjoyed by the propertied classes alone. The probable effects of such security on temperance and industrial perseverance are hardly to be over-estimated.

Such then in very general terms is the "progressive" trend as judged by the movement of thought, by the speeches of leaders, and by actual legislation. If the term were not set apart as the designation of a small and extreme party it might fitly be called a trend towards Social Democracy. Literally it is the endeavour to apply throughout the social fabric, in the field of economics, in industry, in the administration of relief, in finance, in local administration, just that democratic spirit which, in the last seventy years was supposed to have won its way in the purely political field. As political democracy won the government of the people for the people, so the newer effort is to win land, industry, the fruits of industry for the people, not by destroying individuality, confiscating property,

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or even by levelling inequalities, but by the constructive and considered rearrangement of institutions inspired by a fuller sense of collective responsibility—inspired equally, I will add, by a sense of justice to the individual and of desire to see his industry reaping its due reward. But the newer social spirit could not carry matters far without raising anew the question whether political democracy had done its work once for all. It could not but rouse all the forces of Reaction to bestir themselves in the defence of their household gods. The collision had to be. Between the democracy in its newer social interpretation and the principle of Ascendency becoming increasingly self-conscious and self-confident there could be no long-continued truce. The day of battle has come, its arena is nothing less than the United Kingdom, and its direct issue the question whether Lords or Commons shall rule the nation.

REVIEW

By R. A. Scott James

Three Years in Tibet. With the Original Japanese Illustrations. By the Shramana Ekai Kawaguchi, Late Rector of Gohyakurakan Monastery, Japan. Theosophical Publishing Society, Benares and London, 1909. 16s. net.

Books are like places of entertainment in that they often afford a pleasure wholly different in kind from that which the author intended. There is an original and cultured gentleman of my acquaintance who is in the habit of visiting suburban music-halls, and deriving therefrom a delight so exquisite as to be beyond the dreams of the accomplished artists who foregather at the Wormwood Scrubbs Empire. In like manner there are books which have come to be accepted as classics on the ground of excellences not aimed at by their authors, not necessarily because the authors were artless, but because their conscious art has no relation to the quality in them which pleases. Pepys was a first-rate Admiralty official and a desirable boon companion, but to his many excellences, known to himself no less than to his friends, that of being a master in English literature would never have been added. A still better example is the *Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*. We read them now because of what we are accustomed to call their "human interest," because they show us the robust, ordinary, fleshly and ideal side of the pious mediæval catholics; they appeal to us humorously and pathetically; they are tragi-comedies of the transcendental life. But they were written to commemorate the pious acts of the saints, and the authors would have been shocked to think that they were contributing to the profane delight of the general and possibly heretical reader. In the same way the *Journal of John Wesley* is a delight to many people to whom Wesley's peculiar excellences make no appeal. He was a great Evangelist, a powerful emotional influence, a considerable thinker, a scholar, a robust man and a gentleman of the Church of England. But in the appeal which his *Journal* makes, all these characteristic qualities are only enhancements, having the effect of dramatic background. That which he consciously aimed at is not that which gives all of us pleasure.

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To books of this class I should be disposed to add that of the Shramana Ekai Kawaguchi. This is not a puzzle or recondite allusion, but the name of a distinguished Japanese priest, scholar and traveller who has recently written a book entitled *Three Years in Tibet*. It must not be supposed from the foregoing words that the Shramana is a simple or unsophisticated writer, or that he has not studied literary effects ; but his intentional effects have the charm of *naïveté* to an English reader, and his narrative is wholly unstudied in respect of all that delights us in it, and is perhaps for that reason nearer to the truth of things than all that in our cultured age we attribute to conscious art. For nature with its essential idealism is the first thing, and art with its own idealism is the second-best with which we content ourselves when nature, with its immediate appeal, is in abeyance.

The Shramana accomplished a journey which has few parallels in the history of travel. He spent three years residing and travelling in the uplands of Tibet after the exclusion of strangers had become a rigorous policy, and before the British punitive expedition had inspired fear of the long-handed foreigner. He had with him no organised escort of men and mules such as accompanied Sir Sven Hedin in his more recent and better advertised expedition. He went alone and in disguise, as Burton went on his pilgrimage to Mecca, on intimate terms with the natives as Mr. Doughty was with the Arabs, a mendicant as Arminius Vambery has been in Asiatic Turkey and Persia. And he had an advantage which none of these travellers had, one which he did not scruple to use to the utmost—he was a Buddhist, like the Tibetans, and not only a Buddhist but an exceptionally learned priest, possessed of a knowledge of things holy which he used with a religious fervour tempered with Odysseian guile. He was no missionary, but he carried the true Buddhism about with him in Tibet as discreetly as Borrow carried his Bibles in Spain ; and his style has a curious resemblance to that of our English gypsy. With every one whom he meets he converses on religion, philology, love or the stars in the gayest argumentative manner, and these dialogues come as interludes to adventures as thrilling as any that ever fall to the lot of man. In a few paragraphs he will dwell on the almost inconceivable perils he experienced from mountains, floods, storms and famine, and in the next he is dryly recording the discourse of a holy lama, the wayside gossip of robbers, or the passionate advances of a love-sick maiden against whose enticements he steeled himself with the fortitude becoming to his profession. He tells us with what joy he preached the simpler truths of Buddhism to the attentive

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nomads, and in the next page remarks somewhat inconsistently : “ I had my own reasons for being painstaking in these preachings. I knew that religious talks always softened the hearts of my companions, and this was very necessary, as I might otherwise have been killed by them. . . . Fortunately my sermons were well received by my companions.” His whole journey was necessarily a long and systematic tissue of deception, but when set on by robbers he disdains to preserve his worldly trash by a concealment of the truth. When his friends in Lhasa discover that he is not, as he has been supposed to be, a Chinaman, but a foreigner from Japan, he begs them to save themselves and send him in fetters to the Dalai Lama ; but sacred meditation and a supernatural voice add themselves opportunely to the persuasions of his friends, and with this divine sanction he makes good his escape.

The book, indeed, has a fourfold value ; it reveals artlessly and perfectly the character of the Shramana Ekai Kawaguchi, and that is worth knowing in itself. Secondly, it unfolds the emotional, volitional and intellectual aspects of Japanese Buddhism, showing this religion both on its theological side and as a practical working influence. Thirdly, it introduces us to a host of Tibetan persons, one after another, giving us not a vague, impressionistic account of them, but of individuals with whom he lived on intimate equal terms in daily social intercourse. And in the fourth place it gives us what we may take to be an authoritative account of the whole social system of Tibet—the priesthood and religion, administration, finance, trade, the relations between the sexes, caste, &c.

The first chapter opens on a note which to the European reader is fantastic. Having in 1891 given up the rectorship of a monastery in Tokyo, he lived for some years as a hermit and devoted himself to the study of Buddhistic books in the Chinese language. In the course of his studies he learnt that there were Tibetan translations of the sacred texts which, though inferior in general meaning to the Chinese, were superior as literal translations. He determined, therefore, to undertake a journey to the forbidden land and travel there alone as a mendicant priest. The many presents which his friends offered him before his departure he “ declined to accept, save in the form of sincerely given pledges ” (and the sum of 430 yen, mentioned subsequently).

From a fisherman he exacted a promise to discontinue the cruel habit of catching fish ; from a poultry-man he secured a promise not to kill fowls ; and “ from immoderate smokers I asked the immediate discontinuance of the habit that would end

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in nicotine poisoning. About forty persons willingly granted my appeal for this somewhat novel kind of farewell presents." We are reminded of John Wesley's exhortations to his followers to abstain from the pernicious habit of drinking tea—"I proposed it to about forty of those whom I believed to be strong in faith; and the next morning to about sixty more, entreating them all to speak their minds freely. They did so; and in the end saw the good which might ensue."* In many moments of dire peril experienced by the Shramana in Tibet, these "effective" gifts, it seems, "contributed largely toward my miraculous escapes."

Before he could begin the most arduous part of his journey it was necessary that he should serve an apprenticeship of no less than three years in Darjeeling and Nepaul, studying the Tibetan language and grammar, and Tibetan Buddhism, befriending beggars with the double object of bestowing charity and gaining information, and ascertaining the possible routes across the Himalayas. Then one day he was conducted to the summit of a lofty and unguarded pass, whence, on July 4, 1900, with his luggage on his back, alone, he stepped on to the soil of Tibet, and entered upon an unknown and apparently interminable wilderness.

In his wanderings over mountains, deserts and rivers there was no form of hardship and danger which he had not to encounter. Now he spent a night in the open nearly frozen by snow, the pain of the cold being interrupted only by the abstraction of "meditation" and the joy of composing *utas* (short poems). Now he was nearly drowned in fording a river, from which he was saved at the moment he was expressing a desire to be born again. Now he was overtaken by a sandstorm, now bereft of his money, now nearly perishing of hunger. But from every danger he emerged triumphant. When he approached the tents of nomads or pilgrims and had pointed his staff at the threatening dogs, he was generally received with hospitality, and on one occasion he fell in with a party of robbers who were undergoing a period of penance at Manasarova, and made him their guest for two months. They approach the sacred peak of Kailasa:

It inspired me with the profoundest feelings of pure reverence, and I looked up to it as a "natural mandala," the mansion of a Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Filled with soul-stirring thoughts and fancies I addressed myself to this sacred pillar of nature, confessed my sins, and performed to it the obeisance of one hundred and eight bows. I also took out the manuscript of my "twenty-six desires," and pledged their accomplishment to the Buddha. I then considered myself the luckiest of men, to have thus been enabled to worship such a holy emblem of Buddha's power and to vow such vows in its sacred presence, and I mused:

* Wesley. Letter to a friend, written December 10, 1748.

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Whate'er my sufferings here and dangers dire,
Whate'er befalls me on my onward march,
All, all, I feel, is for the common good
For others treading on Salvation's path.

The sight of my performance of these devotional practices must have been a matter of wonder and mystery to my companions. They had been watching me like gaping and astonished children, and were all intensely curious to know why I had bowed so many times, and read out such strange Chinese sentences. I was glad to explain to them the general meaning of my conduct and they seemed to be deeply struck with its significance. They said they had never known the Chinese Lamas were men of such Bodhisattvic mind! The upshot was that they asked me to preach to them that night, a request to which I was very glad to accede. The preaching which followed, which I purposely made as simple and as appealing to the heart as possible, seemed to affect them profoundly, and to make the best possible impression on them; so much so that they even shed tears of joy. The preaching over, they said in all sincerity that they were glad of companionship, and even offered to regard me as their guest during the two months which they intended to spend in pilgrimage to and round the Kang Rinpoche. They thought that their pilgrimage over such holy ground, while serving such a holy man as I now was to them, would absolve them completely from their sins.

It was during this pilgrimage that there occurred the tender episode already alluded to, from which the Shramana, though "neither a block of wood, nor a piece of stone," emerged even more creditably than John Wesley when similarly tempted in Georgia.

I can give no account here of his arrival in Lhasa, the reputation he gained as a "Chinese" physician, his kindly reception by the Dalai Lama, or his intimate friendships with the apothecary and the ex-Minister of Finance. He gives a vivid picture of the life of the different classes of priests and monks, and the corrupt state of the Tibetan hierarchy. He describes the rudimentary system of education, the harsh and haphazard administration, the brutality of punishments, the system of espionage, the free position of women and the practice of polyandry, the filthy personal habits of the people, their superstitions, their occupations, the festivals. I do not dwell upon these matters, partly because many of the features described are common to other oriental countries, but mainly because I am here considering the peculiar excellence of the book as a book of travel, as a "human document"—as the phrase goes—as an imaginative representation of a singularly vivid and keenly felt experience. A number of Tibetans are made alive and knowable to us, not as observed oddities, but as people with whom the author lived. And it is strange that to European readers they should be made known in this intimate way by a man who himself belongs to a nation which is supposed to be the antithesis of the nations of the West.

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